

**Utilization of Economic Research Findings in Policy Making
in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities**

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Abstract

A brief review of the literature suggests that the rational model of policy making process which creates considerable opportunities for the utilization of knowledge generated through policy research in policy making process is no longer a true reflection of the reality. The contemporary reality is that policy making process is an iterative one involving interaction amongst three broad streams of activities, namely, problem definition, solution proposals and choice of the line of action through political consensus. The challenges posed and opportunities presented by this situation are identified. The main conclusion is that policy research organizations should seek to insert their ideas into the streams of activities in the contemporary policy making process, which involve several players on the executive and legislative arms of government, the business associations, the labour unions and the civil society organizations.

Résumé

Une brève revue de littérature suggère que le modèle rationnel du processus de prise de décision publique, créant d'énormes opportunités d'utilisation des connaissances générées par la recherche, ne reflète plus la réalité. La réalité contemporaine est que le processus de prise de décision politique est une démarche interactive impliquant une interaction entre 3 grands domaines d'activités qui sont, la définition du problème, les propositions de solution et le choix d'un plan d'action consensuel. Le papier fait ressortir les défis et opportunités liés à ce processus. La principale conclusion de l'étude est que les institutions de recherche en politiques devraient chercher à intégrer leurs idées dans les domaines d'activités du processus de prise de décision publique moderne, impliquant plusieurs acteurs des branches exécutive et législative du gouvernement, des associations d'affaires privées, des syndicats de travailleurs et des organisations de la société civile.

Introduction

By the beginning of the new millennium, governments of several Sub-Saharan African countries have at least one policy research organization. For one thing, each central bank has a research department of some sort. In several of these countries, special interest groups such as the labour unions, the manufacturers association, the chambers of commerce and bankers have research departments within their organizations or have set up their own research organizations. There has also been a mushrooming of consultancy outfits and the so called non-governmental organizations owned and operated mainly by retired scholars. This is in addition to a relatively few civil society organizations with research departments or research outfits as subsidiaries. An important source of policy research is the group of international financial institutions, UN Agencies and the donor community at large. Therefore, contrary to the situation during the first decade of political independence when the supply side of market for policy research was the exclusive preserve of the international financial institutions, the United Nations Agencies and the donor community at large, most of who operated through expatriate consultants, the situation is now somewhat more competitive.

The demand side of policy research has also become more competitive with the freedom from autocratic leaders and the onslaught of democratization. With the termination of military rule and the collapse of authoritarian civilian regimes in increasing number of countries, the demand for policy research output is no longer restricted to the executive arm of government as the legislature is now on board in several of these countries while the political parties, civil society organizations, business associations, labour unions and other special interest groups have considerable influence in the policy making process.

Yet, there is a general agreement that knowledge generated through policy research seldom influence policies directly. There is, therefore, a case of considerable underutilization of installed capacity in the area of policy research. In order to improve the situation, i.e., increase the influence of policy research in policy making, there is need to examine the challenges posed and the opportunities provided by the nature of the contemporary policy making process and, hence the features of demand for policy research input in policy making. This is the preoccupation of this paper.

Accordingly, the paper begins with a brief discussion of the models of policy making considered suitable for the present purposes. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of the policy research organizations identified above and their influence on policy making processes. Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations likely to enhance the utilization of policy research in public policy making.

Models of Policy Making

The literature on policy making models is quite vast and growing. The growth of this literature has received considerable impetus in recent times following the activities of the Global Development Network (GDN). For instance the theme of the first GDN Conference held in 1999 was Bridging Knowledge and Policy. See Stone (2000) for the papers presented at this conference. Earlier reviews of the literature on models of policy making process include Weiss (1986), Webber (1984, 1987) Sutton (1999), and Garret and Islam (1998). Among the plethora of more recent works in this area are those of the Evaluation Unit of IDRC, especially the works of Neilson (2001) and Maessen (2003). While there have been studies focusing on the relevance of social science research in policy making in Africa (Ajakaiye and Roberts, 1997; Sanda, 1980) there is dearth of studies on the policy making process with specific reference to Africa. In this connection, therefore, the work of Porter (1995) is a pertinent one. Accordingly, the rest of this section draws considerable inspiration from this work.

While there are several classifications of the models policy making process, the following classification is considered pertinent for the present purposes, viz,

- The Stages (Linear) Models and
- Iterative Interactive Model

The Stages Model of Policy Making Process

This model has been variously referred to as rational, comprehensive or linear models. A variant of this model has also been called incrementalist or muddling through model. The basic premise of the model is that policies, like drugs have the following three types of effects, viz,

- intended and desired effects,
- unintended but desired effects and
- unintended and undesired effects. (Ajakaiye, 1992).

Therefore, the primary goal of the policy making process is to arrive at the most efficient policy or battery of policies that will maximize the first two effects and minimize the last one. Thus, in the model, decisions are made sequentially in the following stages:

- the identification of a problem, issue or phenomenon,
- articulating plausible alternative policies, identifying, assessing and comparing the significance or otherwise of each of the three possible effects of the alternative policies;
- selecting on the most efficient one for implementation. (Stone et. al., 2001:5; Sutton, 1999:9; and, Porter, 1995:3).
- Implementation of the chosen policy; and
- Evaluation of the impact or outcome of the intervention.

It may be pertinent to mention that it is the last stage of this model of policy making process that qualifies it as a process rather than an activity for the most effective policy that is efficiently implemented will inevitably have certain undesired effects. These undesired effects identified during the evaluation or impact assessment stage invariably constitute at least part of the problem, issue or phenomenon thereby returning to the first stage of the process.

Needless to say, the linear model has led donors to support substantial efforts to strengthen policy analysis in developing countries in the expectation that good analysis will translate to good decision making and subsequently into good policies. As a result, donors mainly working through the ACBF, SISERA and AERC have provided technical assistance and institutional support grants aimed at building and utilizing capacity for policy research and analysis in several SSA countries.

It has also been suggested that a roughly linear model of the policy making process underlies many analysis of the reforms proposed to the developing countries by the IFIs. Using their financial leverage and exploiting the precarious debt situation of the African countries, a proposed reform, especially by the IFIs, easily gets on the agenda for government action, a decision is made on the proposal and the new policy or institutional arrangement is implemented either successfully or otherwise (Grindle and Thomas, 1991:121). Under the dollar diktat, elaborated in Ajakaiye and Roberts (1995) the influence of society centered forces such as interest groups, parties and voters are either suppress or ignored by the state centered forces of the security apparatus, the technocrats, the bureaucrats, and other non-state stakeholders who are likely to gain from these policies. This is a possible explanation for the various protests and strike actions that always accompany these policies.

A feature of this perception of the relationship between research and policy making process is that it makes the demand for or utilization of research by policy makers seem imperative. In that case, the challenge is to create and sustain supply capacity for policy research. Experience in SSA and evidence from elsewhere suggest, however, that this assumption of inevitability of utilization of policy research in policy making is not necessarily a true reflection of the reality. Indeed, several writers have observed that policy makers seldom used knowledge gained through research in policy making process because the reality is a lot more complex than this model assumes (Phillips and Seck, 2004:3; Neilson, 2001:6; Caplan, 1979 and Weiss, 1977). In essence, policy making process can be conceived as a market for ideas (Phillips and Seck, 2004). A policy research organization is, therefore, in the business of producing and contributing high-quality policy relevant information to a pool of knowledge that policy makers can access when they need it and use as they see fit. (Garrett and Islam, 1998:4).

It follows that attractive as it may seem and inevitable as it appears, especially when operating under the influence of the IFIs, there is really nothing compelling effective utilization of policy research in the policy making process in Africa and, indeed, anywhere in the world. It is reasonable to presume that the excessive attention paid to the first three stages of the linear model of policy making process, namely,

problem identification, articulation and analysis of the alternative policies and selection of the most efficient one (from the perspective of the analysts), by the IFI and subsequent deployment of their leverages to secure the adoption of their preferred policy option while they have limited influence on the effective implementation of policy must have contributed significantly to the unintended and often undesirable outcomes. Such has been the fate of SAP whereby once the proponents step onto the plane feeling fulfilled by the statements of adoption by the policy makers, these policy makers are either confronted with serious protests and civil unrests that may threaten their interest of remaining in power. In response, the implementation process is either completely derailed or proceeds in fits and starts.

The important point here is that it is important not to mistake the decision by a policy maker for an authoritative decision. In this context, an authoritative policy decision is one that is actually implemented (Porter, 1995). It is, therefore, important not to assume that mere announcement of a policy decision by a high level policy maker makes the policy authoritative. This 'official announcement trap' is always fallen into by the donor community members only to discover that this does not necessarily make it authoritative as such policy may not be fully implemented, if at all.

Iterative Interaction Model

The iterative interaction model assumes that as a policy initiative moves through the stages in the linear decision making process, several actors are involved and their actions determine the fate of the policy at any of the stages. For the purposes of elucidating this model, the stages of the linear model can be grouped into three, namely,

- problem identification or **agenda setting stage**,
- articulation and analysis of alternative policy options or **solution stage** and
- **implementation stage**.

During each of these stages, at least three groups of actors are at work, namely,

- ❖ **the government policy makers and implementers** made up of politicians in power and the bureaucrats,
- ❖ the **special interest groups outside government** encompassing politicians not in power, business interest organizations, the labour unions and sundry interest groups; and
- ❖ the **international donor community** lead by the IFIs.!

During the agenda setting and solution stages, the government and international donor community, especially the IFIs tend to dominate the process in virtually all African countries. The influence of the IFIs tend to dominate that of the government in countries that depend heavily on foreign aid and/or have high debt burden. Such countries are required to undertake certain reforms prescribed by these institutions before they can be eligible for financial assistance from them or before they can support their pleas for debt rescheduling. In short, the influence of African governments at the first two stages tends to be severely reduced contrary to the claims by both government and the IFIs to the contrary. In such a situation, the government claims that the policies are 'home grown' while the IFIs claim that the policies enjoy 'national ownership'. The reality, however, is that these are the imperatives of the conditionality. During these stages, the influence of the special interest groups tend to be minimal.

The last stage is when real contestation and engagements between the government policy makers and the special interest groups ensue. A feature of the special interest groups is that they can be further decomposed into two sub-components, namely the sub-component that finds the policy to be beneficial to them and are, therefore, in support and the sub-component that sees the policy not to be beneficial and so oppose it. Experience in Africa abounds to show that often times, the government deploys its powers to suppress the opponent of the policy while promoting those who favour it. Where there is popular support for the policy, it is usually easy to suppress and perhaps permanently silence the minority among the special interest groups who may be against the policy.

If, however, the opponents are in the majority or they are politically powerful, any effort to suppress them may be successful only in the interim as members of this group tend to persist in their criticism and resistance, including organizing protests and civil unrests. Eventually, government will either concede and abandon the policy, continue to implement it without desirable effect because of perverse response of the stakeholders or there may be a change of government or key government actors after which the policy will be reversed or seriously modified beyond recognition. Experiences of several reforming African countries abound to illustrate each of these three possibilities.

The experience of several African countries under the SAP, the emergence of multi-party democracy and the termination of authoritarian regimes has opened up the space of more active engagements of the hitherto passive special interest group of actors in the problem identification and solution stages of the policy making process. This development has made the process to deviate quite significantly from the sequential process implied by the linear or stage model. As such, all actors are now involved in the debate and contestations of each stage although the government in league with the IFI in particular still dominate the first two stage while the special interest groups or non-state actors tend to be more influential during the last stage. It follows that a policy is not authoritative, as defined, unless it enjoys the support of the majority and/or the relatively more powerful sub-component of the non-state actors as such policy decision will be difficult to implement, if at all.

Nature of Demand for Research/Analysis in Iterative Interactive Policy Making Model

Characteristics of Policy Research Organizations

In order to appreciate the nature of the demand for research/analysis inputs into the policy making process described in the preceding section, it should be instrumental to examine the characteristics of the policy research organizations. In this regard, it is important to note that each of the three groups of actors now actively participate in each of the stages of the iterative interactive policy making process. It has been mentioned earlier that, as at now, there is hardly any African government that does not own a policy research organization of some sort. At least they all have a central bank and it is a standard practice for the central bank to establish a research department. Quite a number of non-state actors now have a research organization or they have a research department within their organization. In any case, they can afford to hire a consultant or commission a study to analyze a particular study for their use. Undoubtedly, the IFIs have the most elaborate and best endowed research outfit in the world. The UN agencies and other donors, especially the bilateral donors also either have a research outfit and/or they regularly engage consultants for this purpose.

Against this background, it is reasonable to assume that each of the three groups of actors that interact in during each of the three stages of policy making process either own or can acquire policy research/analysis for their use in engaging in the process. For those that own a research outfit, it can be assumed that such outfits can either respond to the demand for policy research/analysis or receive research outputs from their organizations as a matter of course. In that case, such research organizations are necessarily sympathetic to the philosophy and world view of their owners. In fact, some of these organization, to retain the attention of their owners, exhibit greater dogmatism than their owners. Of course, for various reasons including seeking an independent opinion, owners of research outfits can outsource research/policy analysis through consultancies or commissioned studies. In cases where actors do not own a policy research outfit, it can only receive research output it has demanded for through commissioned study.

A Typology of Policy Research/Analysis

At this stage, it should be incisive to briefly discuss the different types of policy research as doing so will assist in fixing ideas about the nature of demand for the different types of policy research/analysis and the challenges and opportunities they present.

Put simply, policy research can be defined as scientific inquiry into a phenomenon or subject in order to provide policy advice based on facts discovered by the inquiry. This is the so-called evidence based policy advice as opposed to the advice based on tradition, convention, intuition, hunch or rule of thumb. On this basis, the following types of policy research, can be identified:

- **Surveillance/monitoring research:** designed to systematically and constantly track developments in the economy and society with a view to identifying potential opportunities and challenges well in advance of their emergence to allow for the design of appropriate policies and programmes to effectively deal with the situation. This type of research is normally carried out by a research outfit owned by a parent organization or within a research department of an organization.

- **evaluative research:** designed to analyze and evaluate the impact of specific policies and programmes against the background of the intended effects and also identify the unintended but desirable effects which should be consolidated as well as identify the unintended and undesirable effects whose impacts must be ameliorated. Evaluative research maybe ex-post or ex-ante. While this type of research can be procured through consultancies or commissioned studies, research outfit owned by a parent organization or within a research department of an organization also produce it.
- **prognostic research:** designed to analyze the developments in the relevant aspects of the economy and society at regular intervals with a view to predicting the future direction the system may take under alternative policy regimes and/or evolving circumstances. This type of research is invariably carried out by a research outfit owned by a parent organization or within a research department of an organization.
- **prospective research:** designed to analyze the developments in the relevant aspects of the economy at regular intervals with a view to predicting the future direction the system may take under plausible circumstances that are largely outside the control of policy makers. This type of research is also carried out by a research outfit owned by a parent organization or within a research department of an organization.

It is easy to deduce that non-state actors and donors without their own research organizations/departments are likely to demand more of evaluative research than the others. Experience shows that in Africa, the non-state actors that own research outfits are engaged essentially in surveillance/monitoring research and evaluative research. Given their size and resource endowments, they are experiencing considerable difficulties in sustaining these research activities such that the option of carrying out prognostic and prospective research is not available to them. Government owned research organizations are also essentially engaged in surveillance/monitoring and evaluative research for the same set of reasons as well as the prevailing paradigm that is averse to long range planning as a strategy for development management. The donors with bona fide and well endowed research outfits are capable of engaging in all types of policy research. The World Bank and MF are the global leaders in this respect. The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), through its thematic and collaborative policy research projects conducted by its large network members, is perhaps the only regional organization that engages in the production of the four types of policy research outputs.

Demand for Policy Research/Analysis in Policy Making

Having discussed the characteristics of the actors in the policy process; the features of policy research organization as they relate to ownership and the associated predisposition to accessing and using policy research; and a typology of policy research, the nature of the demand for policy research input in the policy making process can be discussed contextually. Foremost, the demand for policy research by non-state actors and donors without policy research organization is likely to be influenced by the need to respond to solve a problem or induced by a crisis. Such demands are rather episodic and they are required when they want to argue for a change in policy or to draw attention to a problem that threatens their interest. Such research, which is mainly evaluative research, is demanded when this class of actors want to intervene at the agenda setting stage or at the implementation stage of the policy process. They meet this demand through consultancies or commissioned research. It has been said that non-state actors are not particularly effective participants at the agenda setting stage while the donors are not particularly effective in the implementation stage. Accordingly, it can be deduced that demand for research by non-state actors and donors without their own research outfits is unlikely to have a profound influence on the iterative interactive policy making process.

Non-state actors with their own policy research outfit tend to concentrate on surveillance/monitoring and evaluate research. Expectedly, this class of non-state actors tend to also have greater influence on the policy process than their counterparts without research outfits. They are, therefore, likely to demand for and effectively use the research findings from their own organizations to engage in agenda setting and challenge implementation of policies which are having undesirable effects on them. Examples of such cases are the chambers of commerce, the association of bankers and manufacturers associations. In several African countries, these associations submit policy memorandum to government and engage in

lobbying and advocacy activities on the basis of evidence obtained from their research outfits. For instance, an NGO interviewee said “*Research does empower groups, you have to have it to make your case, you just can’t shout slogans*”. See Coe et. al (2003:6).

It has been said that state actors normally own at least one policy research outfit either as a department within a ministry or as an autonomous organization outside the government bureaucracy. Invariably all central banks have a research department. However, it has also been said that owing to the precarious financial situation of these organizations as well as the dominant neo-liberal paradigm, they are constrained to doing surveillance/monitoring research and evaluative research. Indeed, these organizations are having considerable difficulties in sustaining these two types of research activities. Those that are able to do so must have been able to attract donor funding whose reliability is not guaranteed. The result, therefore, is that demand for research by government is facilitated either by crisis of implementation, or in order to defend/justify a particular policy action or as a delay tactic (Coe et. al., 2003; Porter, 1995; Stone et. al., 2001).

The dearth of prospective and prognostic research emanating from government research organizations implies that the demand for policy research emanating these organizations by government is essentially a derived demand. It implies that these organizations are essentially reactive and defensive to the total neglect of their proactive roles in shaping policies through prospective and prognostic research outputs. Meanwhile, unless they are active in these areas of research, there is the tendency on the part of the state actors to undervalue them and their outputs. This is especially the case if the policy makers failed to win an argument with other actors during any of the three stages in the policy process. It should be noted that this failure may not be a reflection of defective research output but the relative power of the various actors.

The IFIs have the most endowed research outfits in the world. They engage in each of the four types of policy research. As a result, they dominate the problem/agenda setting and solution stages of the iterative interactive policy making process. They monopolize the markets for prognostic and prospective policy research output which contributes to their dominance of the problem and solution stages of the policy making process. Their surveillance/monitoring research produces enormous data from which they construct numerous indicators which enables them identify problems well in advance of their emergence. Through the subsequent prospective research, they are able to initiate discourses on imminent problems and solutions even before the other actors recognize the problem. Through prognostic research, they are able to influence, if not dictate, the development paradigm and the associated philosophical underpinnings of development policy. Their monopoly of these two important markets for policy research creates a ‘no alternative’ syndrome as no organization in Africa is in a position to produce similar research outputs which may or may not confirm the findings of the studies by these IFIs.

The research outfits of these IFIs, like their counterparts owned by government and non-state actors, normally articulate the problems and solutions in ways compatible with the mandate and interest of their owners. It turns out that there is nothing guaranteeing that proposals that are consistent with the interests of these organizations will necessarily be in the interest of their client countries. It is, therefore, the primary responsibility of the other actors to break the monopoly of prospective and prognostic policy research output in order to be effective participants in the problem and solution stages of the policy making process. This way, the excessive dominance of these stages of the process will be minimized. It should be noted that increased influence of the other actors at these stages does not necessarily imply that the outcomes will be different. Rather, the resulting policy decisions/choice will be genuinely participatory and broadly owned by all stakeholders including the development partners, secure non-perverse response to the policies, especially by the national organizations and stakeholders and create the necessary condition for successful and effective policy implementation with less disappointing outcomes.

Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations

Main Challenges

The main points of this paper which constitute the challenges in the utilizations of research/policy analysis in policy making in Africa are as follows. First, iterative interactive policy making process is a better reflection of the reality in the African context. However, it has been difficult for the process to produce authoritative policies defined to mean policies that are effectively and efficiently implemented. This is because the influence of donors and, to a lesser degree, the state actors dominate the problem/agenda setting and solution stages of the iterative interactive policy making process while the non-state actors exert greater influence on the implementation stage. It turns out that policies chosen that do not enjoy the support of majority of the socially powerful and politically influential non-state actors are not likely to be effectively and efficiently implemented.

Second, the research organizations owned by African governments and non-state African actors are not resource endowed and they tend to concentrate on evaluative and, to a lesser degree, monitoring research. They rarely engage in prognostic and prospective research making them essentially reactive research organizations. The result is they cannot initiate discourses on issues of development problem/agenda setting and solutions.

Third, only the research outfits of the IFIs produces the four main types of policy research/analysis, namely, surveillance, evaluative, prospective and prognostic research. They therefore dominate the problem/agenda setting and solution stages of the iterative interactive policy making process. However, because they have limited influence on the implementation stage, the efficacy of their ideas in enhancing development is severely decimated because the policies which African governments find expedient to adopt are not implemented. In short, their policy proposals are not authoritative.

The upshot of the foregoing is that African policy makers, indeed, seldom use policy research/analysis in policy making not only because of the Caplan's two community arguments but probably more important is the uneven power relations of the various actors in the stages of the policy making process and the inability of national research organizations to engage in prospective and prognostic research. Also, the strategy of the donor community led by the IFIs to use their financial and other leverages to get the governments to adopt the agenda and solutions proposed by the IFIs while these solutions are not effectively implemented, if at all is a challenge that must be addressed.

Opportunities

A major opportunity for enhancing the utilization of policy research/analysis in policy making in Africa is the fact that enabling environment for participatory development management is being actively promoted by the international community. At the national levels, African governments are becoming more tolerant of alternative view points. The era of massive suppression of different perspectives and opinions is fading away. The space for participation in the policy process is expanding systematically. There are cases where governments have reversed unpopular policies and there are few cases where governments have been changed partly on account of lack of authoritative policies.

At institutional level, the fact that there now exists in virtually all African countries, a significant number of policy research organizations creates the potential for the utilizations of research/analysis in policy making in the continent. The capacity building activities of AERC over the last fifteen years has increased the supply of high caliber economist capable of doing high quality policy relevant research. The activities of SISERA in terms of provision of institutional development and core funding for institutional research was beginning to create opportunity for these organizations to initiate surveillance/monitoring research and initiate prognostic and prospective research. The role of ACBF in actively promoting the establishment of policy research organizations where none existed and supporting the ones that existed in terms of institutional development grants has contributed to the significant increase in number of countries with policy research organizations within and outside government. Currently, ACBF is promoting the establishment of policy research units in the legislative arm of governments to enhance the quality of policy debates and the eventual policy decisions and outcomes.

At the international level, the commitment to participatory policy making process through the

PRSPs creates opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the agenda setting, solution choices and implementation stages of the iterative interactive policy making process. Also, the global commitment to accountability and transparency creates opportunity for feedback from all stakeholders. Moreover, the IFIs are becoming more flexible and less dogmatic compared to the situation that prevailed during the last two decades of the last century. The so-called Washington Consensus has been toned down at least and the World Bank, in particular has been quite receptive to the idea of cooperating with national research organizations in conducting policy research and analysis. Nevertheless, the strategy still remains that of relating to these organizations on consultancy basis.

Recommendations

In order to respond to the challenges and take maximum advantage of the opportunities for the utilization of policy research/analysis in policy making in Africa, there is need to level the playing fields in the agenda setting and solution stages by empowering the non-state actors as well as the state actors to participate effectively in these stages. One way to do this is to intensify support for African research organizations owned by state and non-state actors to enable them carry out high quality surveillance/monitoring research, evaluative research, prospective research and prognostic research like their counterparts in the IFIs. Since these capacities are reasonably in place, what is needed is adequate and sustained core funding. Therefore, the opportunity created by SISERA for core funding of the organization should not only be sustained but it should be expanded.

The initiative of AERC to strengthen its relationship with national and regional policy research organizations as well as research centers within the universities should also receive support and encouragement, especially as it is designed to strengthen the linkages between research and policy and between policy and research. Indeed, since AERC has consolidated its capacity building activities through research and training, it should be encouraged to engaged in the type of institutional support activities provided by SISERA. This should be particularly complementary to the current AERC capacity building activities as it will provide opportunity for effective, relevant and contextually meaningful mobilization of senior researchers in the conduct of the four types of policy research/analysis discussed in this paper

Also, there is need to intensify and systematize cooperation between policy research organizations of the IFIs and the donors and their counterparts in the various countries. It should be recognized that the desirable kind of competition among research organizations is contest of ideas and not seeking organizational monopoly of ideas and influence. In this regard, the UN system, World Bank and IMF as well as other donors should intensify their reliance on national research organizations in carrying out country-level research and analysis. As a matter of principle, the research outfits of the IFIs should work in concert with national research outfits in agenda setting and solution stages of their engagement in the policy process. This calls for extensive and sustained partnership in research between research organizations of the IFIs and their counterparts. In that regard, dogmatism should give way to pragmatism to enable genuine contest of ideas. The IFIs and other donors can then deploy their leverages on government to adopt the agenda and solutions arrived at in collaboration with research organizations within the country. The policy decision made on the basis of this kind of evidence should become authoritative as it is likely to be more effectively implemented.

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