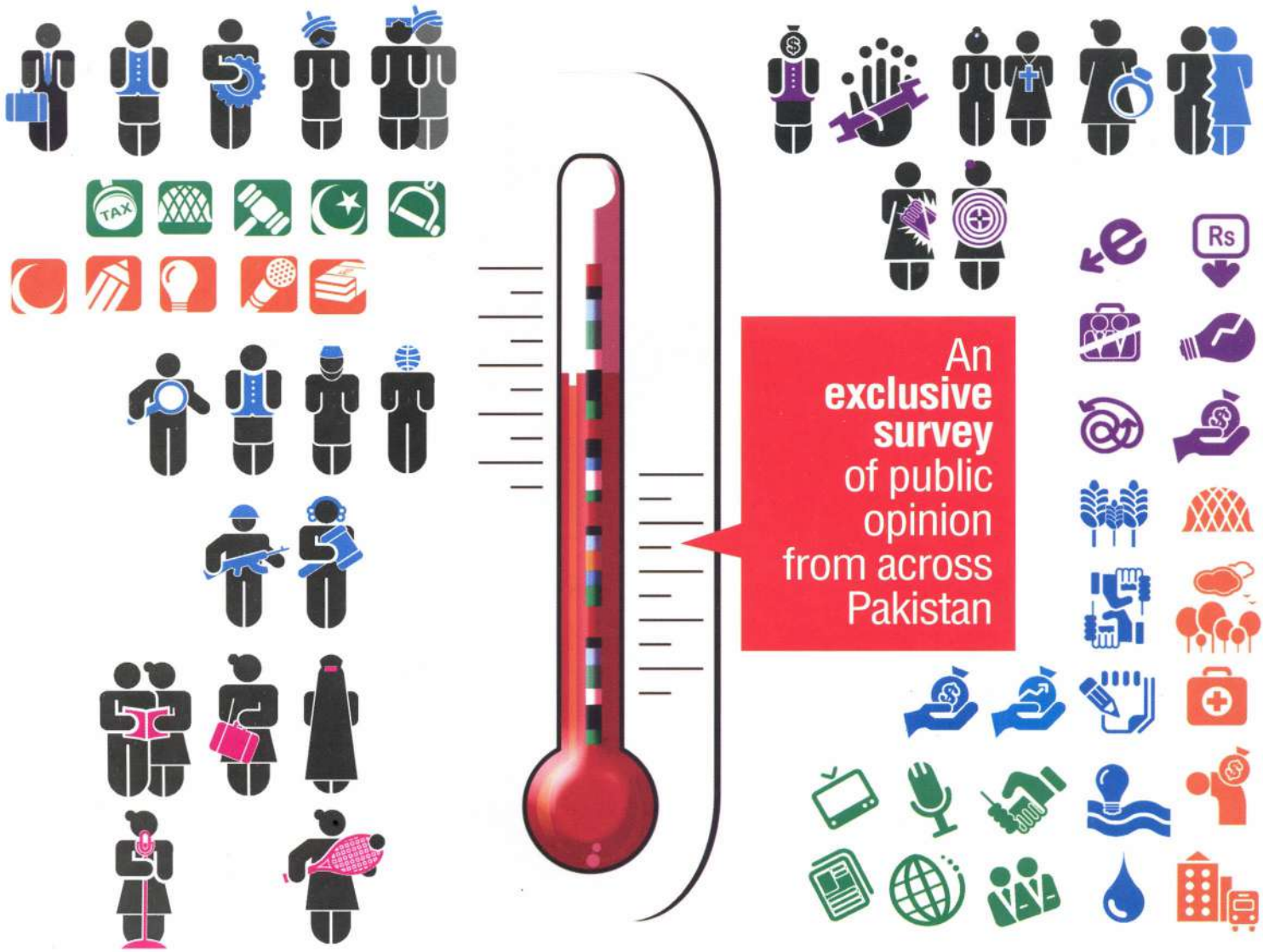
POLITICAL BAROMETER

February 2013



An **exclusive survey** of public opinion from across Pakistan

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

SDPI
Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Herald

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) was founded in August 1992 to serve as a source of expertise for policy analysis and development, policy intervention, and policy and program advisory services. SDPI conducts research and advocacy from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective. Among many other things, it disseminates its research findings through the media, conferences, seminars, lectures and publications.

Note of thanks

I am extremely grateful to all those individuals and institutions which extended their invaluable help and cooperation in the production of the Political Barometer.

Special thanks is due to the Heinrich Boll Foundations Pakistan for financing the data collection and data analysis part of the survey. The senior members of the staff at the foundation – especially Britta Peterson, its Country Director – were extremely supportive throughout the Political Barometer process — even when we decided to come up with a sample baseline which is not generally used in Pakistan for political opinion surveys.

My gratitude is also due to the SDPI staff, especially Shakeel Ramay and Mohsin Ali Kazmi, who made all possible effort to make the Political Barometer a success throughout all its phases – conceptualisation of the questionnaire, collection and crunching of data and other logistical arrangements. Without their hard work and input the survey would not have met its deadlines.

I am also indebted to Dr Talat Mahmood of the Social Science Research Center Berlin for his advisory role throughout the Political Barometer processes.

I am also thankful to the Herald and its editorial staff. They ensured that every part of the questionnaire made sense and they also performed the herculean tasks of editing and fact checking at evey stage of the process. The Herald also deserves thanks for adding editorial value to the data by engaging a team of eminent experts to interpret and analyse the findings of the survey.

Dr Abid Suleri
Executive Director

Instead of a foreword: A few remarks about this project

I am glad having the opportunity to write a few sentences on the Political Barometer on the occasion of this 3rd reprint. Providing the public in Pakistan and abroad with a sound, well researched opinion poll on relevant matters in Pakistan had been a common dream of ours and SDPIs for a while. With our support and the advice of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB), SDPI managed to pull off the project in 2012 that led to the first publication of the Political Barometer (a title borrowed from a long-standing, respected German opinion poll) in the magazine "Herald" (Karachi) in February 2013.

On 20th March it was presented by Dr. Abid Suleri of SDPI in our Headquarter in Berlin and became a huge success. The unending number of requests for copies from academics, journalists, diplomats and the development community in Berlin is one of the reasons for this reprint. The responses were overwhelmingly positive; some readers even congratulated us on having produced the best data basis available on political matters in Pakistan.

Be that as it may. We believe that serious public opinion research can be a way of rationalizing the political discourse. However, it is not immune against misuse. There have been a few voices in Pakistan who accused us as a foreign organization of meddling into internal affairs. I would like to state here clearly, that Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Pakistan does not support any particular political party and that the results of the Political Barometer are the findings of SDPIs and Herald's research teams who have been working according to international standards of opinion polling.

Neither of us has a hidden agenda. On the contrary: Our agenda was and is to find out what the people of Pakistan think and believe - in order to make the political process more transparent, both for the public and decision makers alike.

If the Political Barometer becomes a useful instrument for researchers, civil society and politicians, it shall have served its purpose.

Britta Petersen
Country Director, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan
Islamabad, 21.6.2013

CONTRIBUTORS

Executive Director, earned his Ph.D. in Food Security from the University of Greenwich, United Kingdom. Dr. Suleri is called on to give policy advice and is serving on various policy forums/advisory boards at national, regional, and international levels.
He has been published in many national and international journals. He also contributes his policy analysis on sustainable development issues in major national and regional papers and on electronic media.

P | **31**

CONTENTS

05 | **EDITORIAL NOTE**
Opinion matters

08 | **PROLOGUE**
Strength in numbers

13 | **VOTING TRENDS**
Battle for the ballot

18 | **FORECAST**
Five scenarios

20 | **ELECTORAL PROCESS**
Vague verdict

26 | **CORRUPTION**
The real poison

34 | **FOREIGN POLICY**
In a world of our own

Dr Mariam Mufti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of International and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma. A comparative political scientist by training, she works on regime change and political participation in hybrid regimes. She received her PhD (2011) and MA (2006) in political science from Johns Hopkins University.

P | **20**

Dr C Christine Fair is an Assistant Professor at the Center for Peace and Security Studies within Georgetown University's Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service. Her research focuses on political and military affairs in South Asia. She has authored, co-authored and co-edited several books and has written numerous peer-reviewed articles covering a range of security issues in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Sri Lanka. Her forthcoming book (OUP, 2013) is on the strategic culture of the Pakistan army.

P | **34**

Zafarullah Khan is an Islamabad-based civic educator and researcher. His research interests include federalism, democratic development, political parties, and the right to information. He holds a Master's degree in Media and Communication from the London School of Economics and an M Phil in Pakistan Studies from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Presently, Khan is working as Executive Director of the Centre for Civic Education Pakistan.

P | **58**

Sakib Sherani is the founder and CEO of Macro Economic Insights (Pvt) Ltd, an Islamabad-based consultancy. He has formerly served as the principal economic adviser to the Ministry of Finance and is an ex-member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council.

P | **52**

Dr Rubina Saigol holds a PhD in the Sociology of Education from the University of Rochester and a Master's degree in Developmental Psychology from Columbia University. She has authored several books including Knowledge and Identity, Symbolic Violence, Ownership or Death, Education: Critical Perspectives. She has also co-edited volumes on feminism and gender which include Engendering the Nation-State, I and II, Locating the Self: Perspectives on women and multiple identities, Aspects of Women and Development, and State of Social Sciences in the 1990s.

P | **74, 86, 98**

45 | **TERRORISM**
Home-grown threats

58 | **THE PROVINCES**
United in discontent

76 | **MEDIA**
Reality TV

83| **GOVERNANCE**
State of neglect

52 | **POLITICAL ECONOMY**
Money, means, and content

68 | **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**
Old habits, new ways

74 | **THE PERFORMING ARTS**
Culture scene

86 | **WOMEN**
On the right track

98 | **RELIGION**
The republic of prejudice

Adnan Rehmat has been associated with the Pakistani media sector since 1990, principally as a journalist and media development specialist. For the last few years he has been associated with efforts on development strategies for the Pakistani media including radio, TV and print.

P | **76**

Professor Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed is Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science and an M Phil (Pakistan Studies) from the University of Karachi and a PhD from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cambridge. Dr Ahmed has to his credit three books; he has also compiled 15 other books on history, politics and literature.

P | **26, 83**

Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi is an independent political analyst. He has a PhD Degree in International Relations/Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, US.

P | **68**

Muhammad Amir Rana is a security and political analyst and the founder and director of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies, an independent Islamabad-based think tank. He has worked extensively on issues related to counter-terrorism, counter-extremism, and internal and regional security and politics. Amir is also the editor of Pakistan Annual Security Report, English research journal 'Conflict and Peace Studies' and Urdu monthly magazine "Tajziat".

P | **45**

Saba Fatima Mirza graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 2012 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. She subsequently joined as a consultant with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), an Islamabad-based think tank, in August 2012. She was responsible for the coordination of the Political Barometer survey and acted as a liaison between the SDPI and the Herald in this endeavour. Her current research interests include student politics and youth activism in contemporary Pakistan.

P | **12**

Editorial note

Opinion matters

The advent of political opinion surveys may well be an indicator of electoral democracy's evolution and maturity in Pakistan. But, as much as such surveys are predicated upon the presence of elections and balloting, they have been pilloried by anyone falling on the wrong side of their findings as flawed or politically motivated, meant to harm party A and benefit party B at a critical juncture in the electoral cycle. Some critics and detractors of the surveys go to the extent of debunking them as interference in the political process at the behest of some foreign, read western, country. Not all of this criticism is deserved.

Like anything new – as is also the case with democracy in Pakistan – there will always be birth pangs and teething problems. Opinion surveys, too, are feeling their way through the myriad complexities of Pakistani society and politics and, in the early phases of their evolution, cannot be altogether dismissed for reflecting some of the social, cultural and systemic inadequacies that the country suffers from. For one, in a country divided along every conceivable fault-line of religion, sect, ethnicity, ideology, party-affiliation and geographical location, no survey methodology can claim to be comprehensive or scientific and no survey sample can call itself representative no matter how stratified and meticulously put together.

This political barometer does not pretend to be perfect — more scientific and more representative than others of its kind. Like all exercises of the same nature, it is selective and, therefore, may easily be faulted for following a flawed methodology or an incomplete sample. No matter which way this survey has chosen and counted them, its less-than-1300 respondents cannot represent a nation of 180 million and counting.

With this admission of inadequacy, the political barometer aims to achieve certain modest targets. For one, it aims at gauging the level of consensus, or the lack thereof, on issues of supreme national interest — such as law and order, corruption, poverty, extremism, education, health, economic and foreign policies as well as the state of the federation. Secondly, it aims to explore the roots of many national problems by documenting socio-cultural attitudes towards, say, political parties, political and electoral process,

women, non-Muslim Pakistanis and foreigners. Thirdly, it links all its findings to the respondents' voting history and their voting intentions in the upcoming polls to see if there is any party, or parties, which addresses the issues of national importance in line with the opinions and perceptions of their traditional or intending voters. This, however, should not be confused with the popularity levels of different political parties and their leaders: This survey has made a conscious effort of staying away from that. In no way should it be seen as an exercise in forecasting the outcome of the 2013 general election.

Rather than creating sensational, controversial headlines around its findings, the survey expects to be seen as a means for promoting national debate over public opinions and perceptions it has tabulated. The purpose and the utility of this exercise lies in its capacity to serve as a verifiable database for researchers, academics, policymakers and politicians. Here's hoping that this political barometer informs and improves research, policy-making and political messaging, with the ultimate objective of addressing the issues and questions that define today's Pakistan. ■

Acknowledgements

This Political Barometer could not have materialised without the financial support (made through a grant by Heinrich Boll Stiftung Pakistan), technical assistance and human resource efforts of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). The Islamabad-based think-tank covered all the costs for data collection and data analysis; it also assigned its field enumerators to collect survey data from half the districts covered in it; the SDPI also tabulated close to 1300 survey forms and then turned the 150 or so questions therein to bar graphs, pie charts and diagrams under eight different variables. The Herald is extremely thankful to the institute for working smoothly, efficiently and tirelessly to see the idea of the survey, conceived as far back as May 2012, through to its final phases of production and printing. Dr Abid Suleri, chief executive officer at SDPI, was a constant source of support throughout the survey process, having played a key role in the making of the survey questionnaire and in defining the methodology of data collection and analysis.

A very strong acknowledgement is also due to Saba Fatima Mirza who has done a remarkable job in coordinating between the Herald and the SDPI during the data collection stage, overseeing and cross-verifying almost every entry that came her way. She also worked closely with a team of SDPI statisticians to make sense of the seemingly overwhelming data under a plethora of categories and variables. She has overseen almost every step of the survey becoming a reality – from the making of the questionnaire to tabulation to designing and printing. Without her, the survey wouldn't have been possibly as comprehensive and its presentation as neat and tidy as it now is. Thank you, Saba.

No Herald publication is ever possible without the hard work that the Creative Unit puts in through its reader-friendly layouts and aesthetically attractive page designs. The survey reflects the painstaking attention to detail that the entire Creative Unit staff has paid to rendering its hundreds of graphs, pie-charts and diagrams readable. Tanaz Minwala and Mannan Hatimali and their extremely cooperative and hardworking colleagues have, almost miraculously, turned seemingly unwieldy data and its accompanying texts into eye-catching and interesting reading material. Like always, the duo has been a source of perpetual support and strength throughout the conception and production of the supplement.

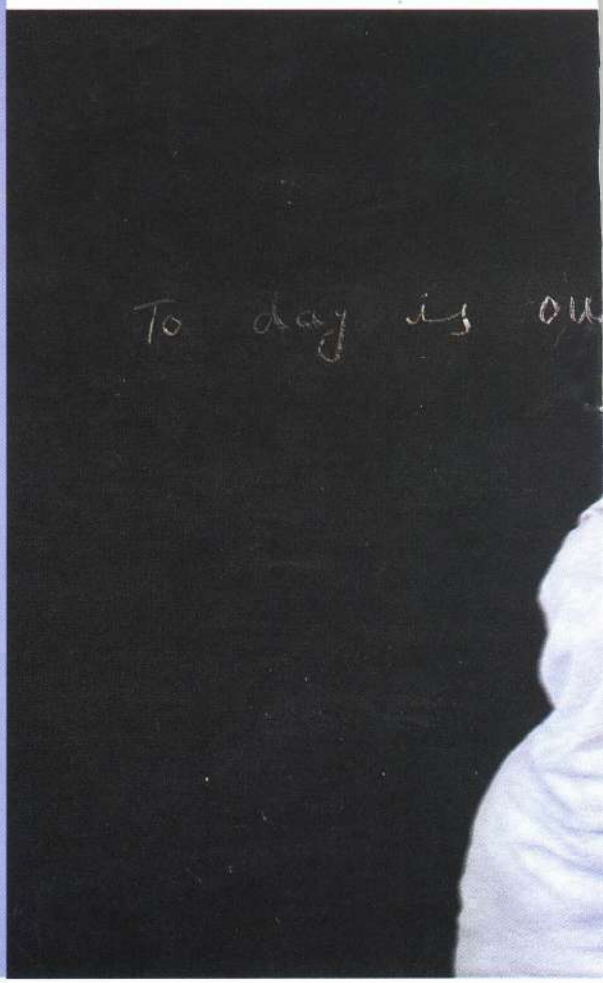
The entire Herald staff also deserves my special gratitude. No office seems to work like the Herald office. The editorial desk, a highly motivated team of young, highly intelligent and hard working women and a man who are never ready to accept anything less than perfect, always bubbles with fresh ideas and the excitement and energy to see them in print. They have been the real force behind many special issues that the Herald has recently brought out. Thank you all for all the extra hours and the additional effort you are always willing to invest to make Herald what it is today.

I am also grateful to all the experts who have analyzed the survey data, adding immense value to the statistics and numbers with their insightful commentary, at very short notice to make it possible for the Herald to bring out this publication on schedule. ■ — Editor

By Saba Fatima Mirza

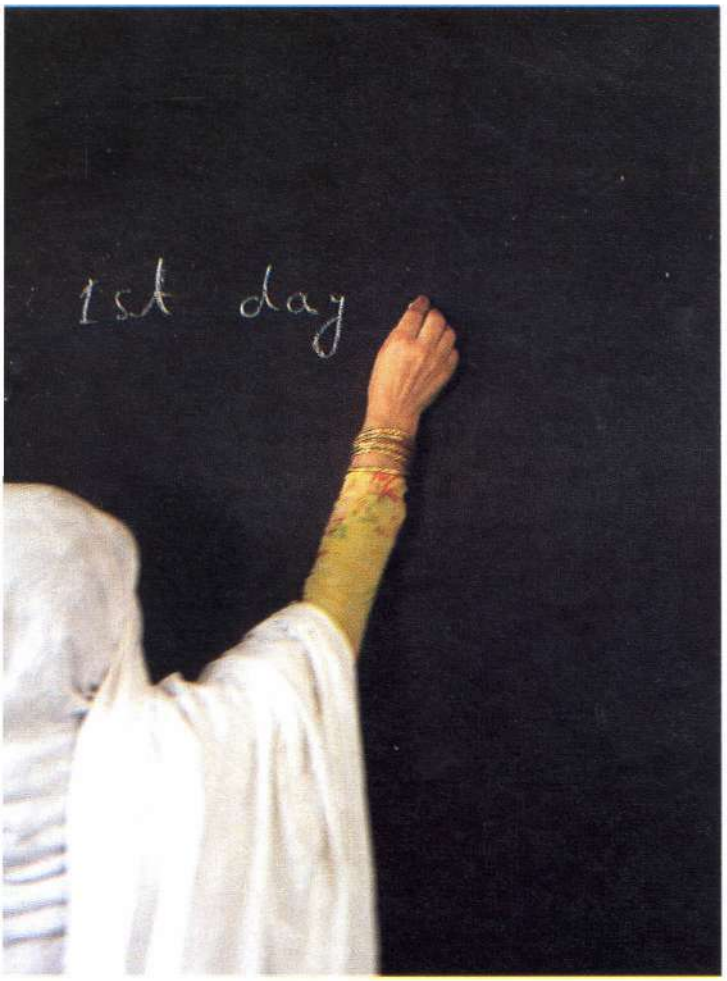
Strength in numbers

Sixty five years of a troubled see-saw between military and civilian government in Pakistan have made the masses impatient with the fundamentally unchanging conditions of poverty, illiteracy and inadequate basic facilities like water and sanitation. Just six years ago, the vehement public opposition to General (retd) Pervez Musharraf's regime was seen as a testament of unanimous public will to bring a civilian government to power. And today many Pakistanis are clamouring for decisions such as the imposition of governor's rule in Balochistan, and supporting Dr Tahirul Qadri's proposed electoral reforms which include military and judicial consultation in the formation of a caretaker government. The allegiance of the people today no longer seems to lie within the civilian-military spectrum but is, rather, sworn to brokers of change, whosoever they may be.



While promises of change resonate most loudly in political rhetoric, certain changes occuring recently are indicators that some much needed reforms are finally being put in place. For the first time in Pakistan's history, the chief election commissioner has been appointed through a parliamentary consensus. The caretaker government, too, is to be set up through consultation instead of being hand-picked by the president. These reforms make the upcoming general election a momentous event in Pakistan's political history, paving the way for an unprecedented transition from one democratically elected government to the next.

For a study that purports to analyse the electorate's mood in the run-up to such a historic moment, it is important to understand the outlook of citizens on issues that divide or unite the country. Forecasting the election's



outcome does not sufficiently serve this purpose. The Herald's Political Barometer, therefore, aims to gauge voters' perceptions on various socio-political and economic issues that weigh in on their decision on casting the ballot. Addressing these issues may increase voter participation during elections, and can prove to be the cause of change that the masses hope for.

While many surveys conducted in Pakistan have focused on issues such as anti-American sentiments, concerns about terrorism and militancy or opinions on the performance of a government, no single survey has dealt with a very wide spectrum of sociocultural, political and economic issues in a comprehensive manner. The Herald's Political Barometer departs from this trend by examining opinion and perceptions among diverse segments of society through a very broad range of socio-political indicators.

The Political Barometer asks close to 1,300 respondents across Pakistan their opinions on issues such as electoral reform, governance, security, interprovincial relations, arts and culture, civil rights and foreign policy. Distinctively, the survey defines its first stratum along ethnolinguistic lines instead of provincial divisions (see sampling on page 18). This has yielded some significant results in outlining key distinctions in perception of issues between different ethnolinguistic groups even within the same province. For example, while 57 per cent of Seraiki-speakers support the creation of new provinces, only 32 per cent of Punjabis support this move and 43 per cent oppose it. Whereas the issue of new provinces is deemed to be a fairly predicable fault line of ethnic difference in Punjab, Seraiki-speakers and Punjabis are also at odds over the issue of foreign aid, with 55 per cent of Seraiki respondents feeling that Pakistan requires foreign aid, while only 29 per cent of Punjabi respondents feel this way. By incorporating an ethnic lens in the exploration of public opinion, survey results thus highlight complex and multifaceted fissures in the nation's political outlook.

As with any other study examining societal opinion, there are outcomes that reinforce some existing stereotypes and others that debunk certain preconceived notions. Perhaps the greatest number of surprises come from questions on Pakistan's sociocultural issues. For instance, contrary to conventional wisdom, the majority of our respondents (88.2 per cent) show an equal preference for girls' and boys' education; while 6.3 per cent believe that girls should be given preference in matters of education, only 4.6 per cent believe that boys should be given preference. The percentage of respondents who favour the education of neither sex is less than one per cent. What is more, a staggering 46 per cent express the view that the government should actively promote co-education, while around a quarter feel that the government should remain neutral and 28.9 per cent favour a government ban on coeducation.

Similarly, despite continuous acts of violence against religious minorities across the country, 72.4 per cent of the respondents say that non-Muslims should have equal rights with Muslims in Pakistan and 81.7 per cent support their freedom to practice their religion. Meanwhile, 88 per cent of the respondents also believe that blasphemy should be punishable by law.

While the statistical data from the survey is itself telling about the nation's attitudes on a wide variety of political issues, in order to contextualise this data and provide readers with a deeper understanding of what it reveals, the Herald requested specialists from the academy and from civil society to study results related to a variety of topics. In this special publication, we present these experts' interpretations and perspectives with the intention that these will further serve to inform the debate on a diverse range of issues related to Pakistani politics and society as well as the upcoming election. ■

Note: The following acronyms for political parties have been used throughout the Political Barometer.
All Pakistan Muslim League (APML), Awami National Party (ANP), Balochistan National Party–Mengal (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam–Fazl (JUIF), Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PMLN), Pakistan Muslim League–Quaid-e-Azam (PMLQ), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

By Saba Fatima Mirza

Inside the Political Barometer

Sampling

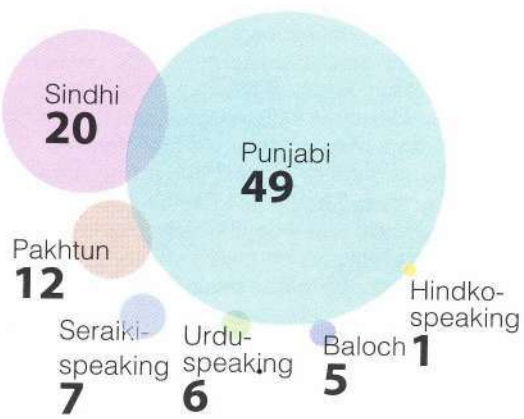
To calculate the demographic sample of this survey, population census data as found on the website of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics was employed. Aiming to reach about 1,000 respondents (our final sample size was 1,283 respondents), we used stratified sampling to integrate various demographic elements into the survey. The first stratum was based on ethnolinguistic lines — Baloch, Hindko-speakers, Pakhtuns, Punjabis, Seraiki-speakers, Sindhis, Urdu-speakers and others; the second was based on gender, and the third one on urban and rural localities. We also distinguished between four different age groups of 18 to 35 years, 36 to 50 years, 51 to 70 years, and 70 and above years. The sample also takes account of respondents from across different income groups and educational levels.

Survey questionnaire

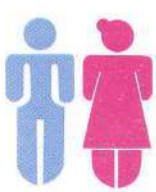
The questionnaire was designed to examine a variety of indicators of public perceptions on a broad range of social, political and economic issues and questions were worded carefully so as not to elicit biased responses. For example, instead of asking "Is democracy favourable for Pakistan?" and providing respondents with just a 'Yes' or 'No' option, we asked them to answer if "Democracy for Pakistan is

Demographic sample

1 | Ethnic break-up



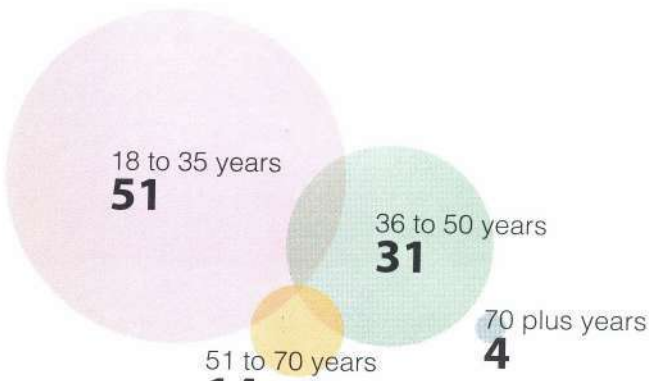
2 | Gender break-up



58 42

Male Female

3 | Age break-up



3.1 Age break-up along urban/rural lines

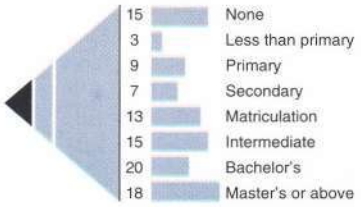
4 | Urban/rural break-up

45 55

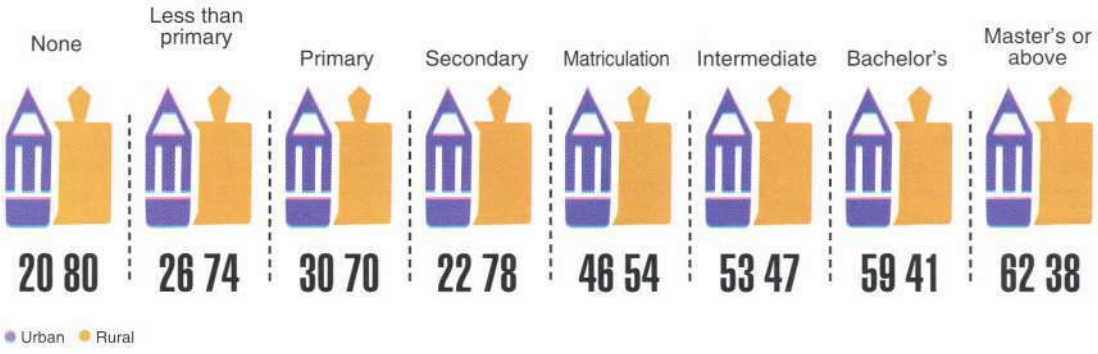
Urban Rural

Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

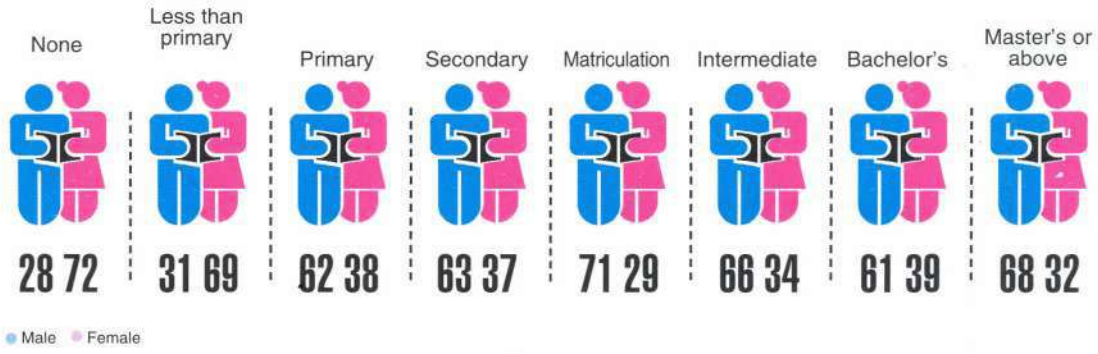
5 Break-up by level of education



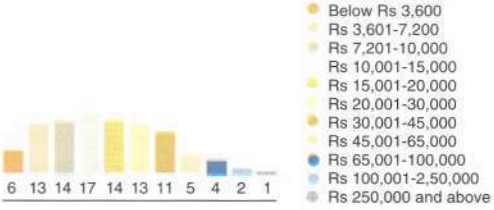
5.1 Break-up by level of education along urban/rural lines



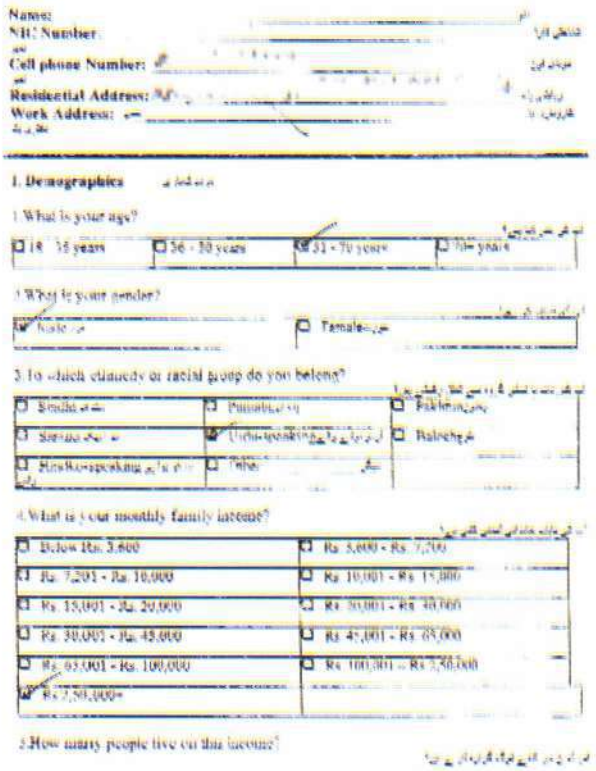
5.2 Break-up by level of education along gender lines



6 Break-up by monthly family income



Note: Compared to the national averages, our survey over-represents Sindhis, Punjabis and the Baloch by six per cent, five per cent and one per cent, respectively, and under-represents Seraiki-speakers, Pakhtuns and Urdu-speakers by four per cent, three per cent and two per cent, respectively. Of the four per cent 'others', only Hindko-speakers are represented.


Name:
NIC Number:
Cell phone Number:
Residential Address:
Work Address:

1. Demographics

1 What is your age?

☐ 18 - 35 years ☐ 36 - 50 years ☑ 51 - 70 years ☐ 70+ years

2 What is your gender?

☑ Male ☐ Female

3 To which ethnicity or racial group do you belong?

☐ Sindhi ☐ Punjabi ☐ Pakhtun
☐ Siraiki ☐ Urdu-speaking ☐ Baloch
☐ Hindko-speaking ☐ Other

4 What is your monthly family income?

☐ Below Rs. 5,000 ☐ Rs. 5,000 - Rs. 7,200
☐ Rs. 7,201 - Rs. 10,000 ☐ Rs. 10,001 - Rs. 15,000
☐ Rs. 15,001 - Rs. 20,000 ☐ Rs. 20,001 - Rs. 40,000
☐ Rs. 30,001 - Rs. 45,000 ☐ Rs. 45,001 - Rs. 65,000
☐ Rs. 65,001 - Rs. 100,000 ☐ Rs. 100,001 - Rs. 250,000
☑ Rs. 250,000+

5 How many people live on this income?

An image of the first page of the survey form of Political Barometer

— 1) Favourable 2) Unfavourable, or 3) Sometimes favourable, sometimes unfavourable". This was to ensure that respondents did not find the questions leading and that they would get a wide range of options to expresses their thoughts and opinions.

The questionnaire included both close-ended questions and open-ended questions asking respondents to give reasons for their answers. Close-ended responses, however, ultimately became the bedrock of the analysis because they were statistically calculable. The questions used multiple choices, 'Yes' or 'No' responses, rankings and ratings to pinpoint preferences amongst respondents. Open-ended responses, while sometimes insightful, were difficult to tally as a whole. Some respondents did not answer open-ended questions at all, while others gave vague answers.

The questionnaire comprised 158 questions overall, and generally took respondents more than an hour to complete.

Interviews

To take the questionnaire to the survey's sample respondents, the Herald engaged a team of around 100 interviewers to conduct infield, face-to-face interviews. Each interviewer was given a particular demographic sample to cover in their assigned areas.

The survey was carried out in 52 districts and two tribal agencies – Gwadar, Turbat, Quetta, Qila Saifullah, Mastung, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bhakkar, Layyah, Multan, Khanewal, Khyber Agency, Mohmand Agency, Kohat, Tank, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Nawabshah, Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Gujranwala, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Sialkot, Jhang, Pakpattan, Lodhran, Rawalpindi, Abbottabad, Kohistan, Mansehra, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Malakand, Peshawar, Charsadda, Swabi, Nowshera and Mardan.

Challenges

To begin with, matching the demographic sample with respondents was not an easy task. Among those respondents who met the demographic criterion, senior citizens would sometimes find giving responses too tedious and it often took multiple visits to have them completely fill out the lengthy survey. Other respondents were sometimes cautious as to why this survey was being conducted and hesitant to express genuine opinions on the government, military and different political parties. Interviewers had a difficult time convincing respondents to share personal information such as their national identity card numbers or cell phone numbers, required for verifying the collected data. Some feared the imposition of taxes in revealing their household incomes. There were also some technical terms that had to be explained to several respondents, for example, 'MFN' and 'foreign direct investment'. This significantly increased the time taken to complete each survey form. All in all, the survey took about three months (September-November 2012) to complete.

Verification

To verify the authenticity of the collected data, survey coordinators phoned about 200 respondents randomly. All contacted respondents corroborated their participation in the survey. ■

Voting trends

By Alizeh Kohari and Saba Fatima Mirza

Battle for the ballot

Pakistani voters appear divided on whom to vote for in the upcoming election and which issues are most critical for the country at present, according to the findings of the Political Barometer.

Of those respondents who said that they have registered for the upcoming election and were willing to indicate a party preference, 29 per cent expressed an intention to vote for the PPP; 24.7 per cent pledged support for the PMLN while 20.3 per cent indicated a preference for the PTI.

White Star

Mind the (generation) gap

Dispelling the notion that the PTI's vote bank is concentrated in younger generations, the survey findings indicate that the party, in fact, derives support from all ages. While 23 per cent of those in the 18 to 35 age group say they would vote for the PTI, approximately 19 per cent of those aged between 36 and 70 claim the same.

A plurality (32.5 per cent) of those aged 36 to 50 indicate a preference for the PPP. Similarly, 46.2 per cent of those over 70 years express a preference for the PMLN.

Compared with the respondents' voting histories, the PMLN's vote bank appears to have remained stagnant while the PPP's vote bank seems to have declined significantly.

It appears that the PTI has a stronger urban base, while a higher proportion of rural respondents indicate that they would vote for either the PPP or the PMLN in the upcoming elections.

The ethnic vote

In line with expectations, the highest level of support for the ruling party is pledged by those who identified themselves as Sindhis, 55 per cent of whom say that they would vote for the PPP in the upcoming election.This was followed by Seraiki-speakers at 46 per cent.

Forty-four per cent of Hindko-speakers say that they intend to vote for the PMLN, closely followed by Punjabis at 43 per cent.

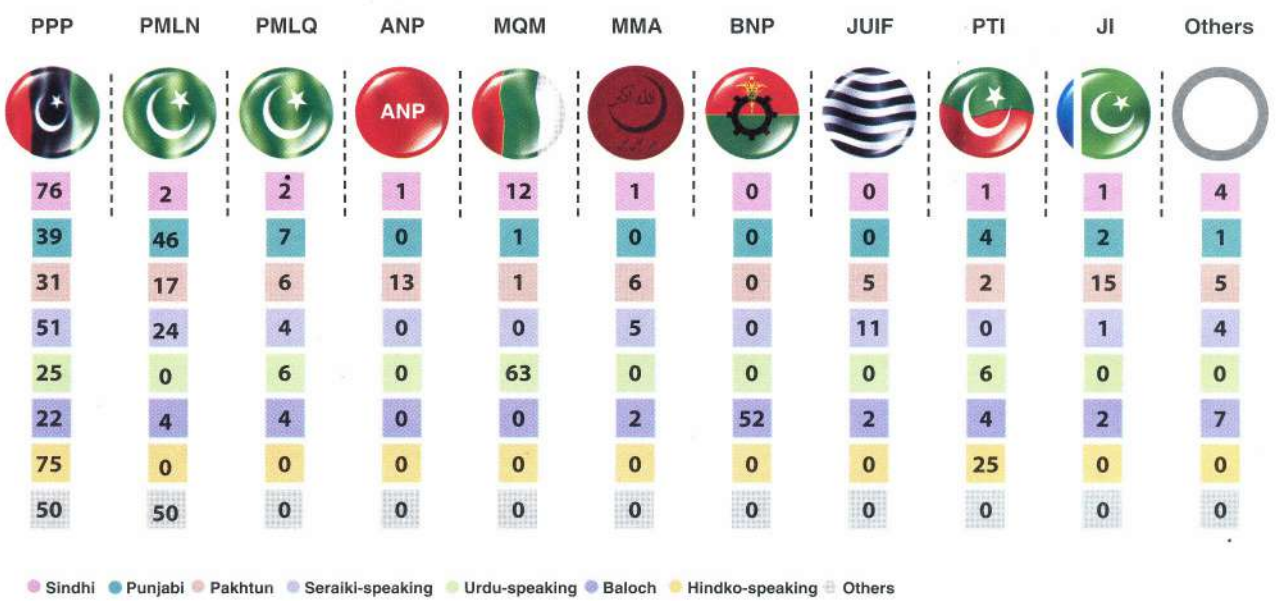
The same proportion of Hindko-speakers – 44 per cent – also express an intention to vote for the PTI, indicating a close contest between the PMLN and PTI, within that particular demographic.

1 | Which party have you voted for most frequently?

1.1 Countrywide indicators

1.2 Age-wise indicators

1.3 Ethnicity-based indicators



Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

White Star

The PPP, headed by Asif Ali Zardari, and the PMLN, led by Nawaz Sharif, emerge as the parties with the highest support among respondents

It is worth noting that while 34 per cent of Pakhtuns say that they will vote for the PTI, only 11 per cent express the same vis-a-vis the ANP. Forty seven per cent of Baloch say they will vote for the BNP.

Money matters

On average, approximately a third of those earning up to 30,000 rupees each month indicate a preference for the PPP whereas among those earning more than 30,000 rupees, support for the party drops to 10.8 percent. This is in keeping with the party's traditional pro-poor image.

No such trend can be determined for the PMLN, whose level of support remains similar across all income levels.

Those earning in excess of 250,000 rupees each month (the highest identified income bracket in the survey) express the maximum intention to vote for either the MQM or the PTI, at 33 per cent each.

While this figure may appear anomalistic in the MQM's case – support for the party within the second highest income bracket (those earning between 100,000 and 250,000 rupees each month) is only four per cent – it is possible to identify a rough direct trend between level of income and support for the PTI.

In general, it appears that support for smaller parties declines with increasing levels of income.

It's the issues, stupid

From a given list, respondents identified – in the following order – poverty, corruption, power crises, illiteracy and extremism as the top five issues crucial to the country today. No issue received more than 17 per cent of the vote, indicating a divided electorate.

A marginally higher percentage of respondents belonging to lower income brackets identify poverty as an issue of concern, while a higher proportion of those at higher levels of income identify – albeit again by a small margin – corruption as a 'crucial issue'.

A similar proportion of urban and rural respondents

2 | If registered, which political party will you vote for?

2.3 Ethnicity-based indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
55	4	0	2	11	1	0	0	0	9	16
19	43	6	0	1	4	0	0	0	23	4
15	10	2	11	2	12	0	1	5	34	10
46	18	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	22	7
9	9	0	0	50	0	0	5	0	23	5
13	2	0	0	0	0	0	47	2	11	25
0	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	11
50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sindhi · Punjabi · Pakhtun · Seraiki-speaking · Urdu-speaking · Baloch · Hindko-speaking · Others

2.1 Countrywide indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
29	25	3	2	4	4	0	3	1	20	9

2.2 Age-wise indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
28	24	2	2	4	4	0	3	1	23	10
33	22	5	2	5	3	0	2	1	19	10
28	29	2	1	5	4	1	2	2	18	8
28	46	0	0	5	3	0	0	5	8	5

18 to 35 years · 36 to 50 years · 51 to 70 years · 70 plus years

White Star

Fifty-five per cent of those who identified themselves as Sindhis said that they would vote for the PPP

(12 per cent each), consider corruption to be an issue that has not been effectively addressed by the current government — an assessment perhaps linked to the prevailing perception (among 55.6 per cent of the survey respondents) of the ruling party as being the most corrupt.

While 59 per cent of respondents rate the performance of the government as either 'poor' or 'very poor', the ruling PPP nonetheless emerges as the party that the highest number of respondents (27.1 per cent) show faith in to most effectively address the identified issues.

Urban respondents appear more dissatisfied with the current government's performance, with 63 per cent rating it as either 'poor' or 'very poor'. Dissatisfaction is also slightly more pronounced with increasing levels of education.

Ten per cent of those earning less than 3,600 rupees a month deem the current government's performance to have been 'excellent' while 23 per cent, conversely, rate it as 'very poor'. In contrast, 54 per cent of those earning in excess of 250,000 rupees a month consider the government's performance to have been very poor.

Indeed, based on the Political Barometer's findings, it is possible to state that those at higher income levels appear relatively more disgruntled by the current government. This is a somewhat surprising conclusion given that among the top five 'crucial' issues identified by the survey respondents, at least two – poverty and illiteracy – are of greater concern to those earning lower levels of income.

For respondents with higher levels of education, extremism, political instability and interprovincial problems appear to be issues of greater concern, whereas those with little or no education deem inflation, gender discrimination and food shortages as bigger problems.

Getting out the vote

Approximately 21 per cent of respondents admit to never previously having voted in an election. Indeed, there appears to be a negative correlation between inclination to vote and levels of income — 38 per cent of those earning above 250,000 rupees a month state that they had never voted before, as compared to 13 per cent of those earning less than 3,600 rupees a month.

Despite this, however, those within the highest income bracket are most likely (at 38 per cent) to have been a member of a political party.

Similarly, while a greater number of respondents from urban areas say that they have been members of a political party (17 per cent) and claim to have been active participants in an election campaign (23 per cent), their political involvement does not necessarily appear to translate into electoral participation.

Twenty-nine per cent of urban dwellers profess to have never voted in an election while 85 per cent of rural respondents have voted in at least one election, with 46 per cent having voted in three or more elections.

Moreover, while it would be expected that higher levels of education may result in greater political participation, 87 per cent of those with no education claim to have voted in three or more elections, while approximately 38 per cent of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher profess to have voted in the same number of election.

Ninety-four per cent of respondents, however, say that they have registered to vote in the upcoming election. For a country with historically low rates of voter turnout, this figure is a heartening one. ■

DAWN

An abridged version of this story was published in Dawn in the early part of February, 2013.

Forecast

By Abid Suleri

Five scenarios

With elections just round the corner, the question of who will be at the helm of the incoming government is becoming an increasingly common one. The respondents of the Political Barometer who are registered and ready to vote indicate that the electoral contest could be a close one. Can the new player on the field, the PTI, help shift the focus from the two mainstream political parties to make a marked difference in the future politics of the Pakistan? Hence, based on these survey findings, things may unfold in a number of ways come elections, giving shape to five distinct scenarios.

White Star

Approximately 29 per cent of survey respondents say they will vote for the PPP

Scenario 1

The PPP forms an electoral alliance with its current allies: the Awami National Party (ANP), the MQM and the PMLQ; while a grand anti-PPP alliance, comprising the PMLN, JUI and JI, but excluding the PTI, simultaneously takes shape.

Based on the findings of this survey, the PPP and its allies may in this case be able to secure 38.1 per cent of the vote. A grand anti-PPP alliance, which excludes the PTI, may secure 29.5 per cent but together with the PTI, this grand opposition alliance could give the PPP a difficult time.

Scenario 2

Alternatively, the PPP forms an electoral alliance with its current allies, the ANP and the PMLQ — but not the MQM, which opts for the grand anti-PPP alliance. Here too, the PTI chooses to remain solitary.

In this instance, the PPP and its allies would likely capture 33.9 per cent of the votes. An opposition alliance could easily secure 33.7 per cent. This scenario would also result in the formation of a minority government — albeit a weaker one, with a more formidable opposition. Either the PPP and the PTI would form the opposition to a PMLN-led government or the PMLN and the PTI would do the same against a PPP-led government.

Ninety-four per cent of survey respondents claim to have registered to vote in the upcoming election

Scenario 3

In this scenario, the PPP forms an electoral alliance with its current allies, the ANP, the MQM and the PMLQ – while the PMLN and the PTI form an opposing alliance. In this case, the PTI and the PMLN would, with 45 per cent of the votes, comfortably sail through the elections, forming a comparatively stable government at the centre. They may be joined by a number of other anti-PPP parties.

Scenario 4

The PPP and the PTI form an electoral alliance, while the PMLN forms a grand opposing alliance. In this instance, the PPP and the PTI would receive 49.3 per cent of the votes and easily form a stable central government.

Scenario 5

The PPP forms an alliance with its current allies, while the PTI and the JI form an alliance. Concurrently, the PMLN forms an alliance with the JUI and other anti-PPP parties. In this instance, the PPP and its allies would receive 38.1 per cent of the vote, the PTI and JI pairing would capture 23.9 per cent of the votes, while the PMLN led alliance would receive 25.9 per cent.

The Verdict

Politics in Pakistan is predicated on uncertainty but there's a high chance that the third and fourth scenarios may never materialise.

Moreover, given that the country is far from being a homogenous entity where support is spread uniformly across all constituencies, the actual outcome may be entirely different from the ones described above.

Indeed, in the first-past-the-post electoral system, percentage of votes scarcely translate into a similar proportion of seats in the national or provincial assemblies.

It is evident, however, that no single party currently stands to sweep the upcoming polls.

Based on the survey findings, it also appears. that the PPP may have to retain its current allies to maintain its present political clout — and that, amidst the traditional PPP–PMLN toss-up, the PTI is emerging as a political reality.

What is most certain is that whoever manages to form the government will most likely have to contend with a strong opposition. Moreover, if responses collected in the Political Barometer are any indication, the next elected government may also find it difficult to figure out what issues to tackle first, in order to soothe an electorate clamouring for change. ■

Vague verdict

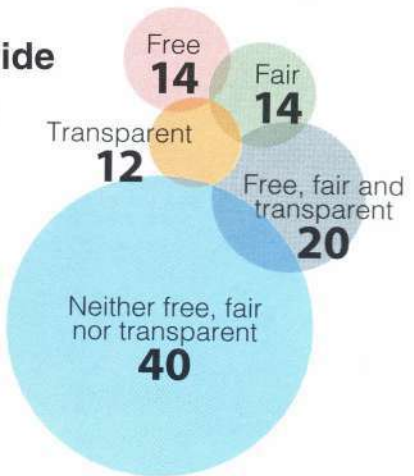
By Mariam Mufti

Prior to an election, three questions about the electoral process are of critical importance to the legitimacy of that election. Firstly, do voters consider the election to be free and fair? Secondly, how do voters perceive the transparency of the electoral campaigns conducted by various political parties? And finally, do voters believe that elections determine the will of the people? The results of a pre-election survey conducted by the Herald are very telling.

White Star

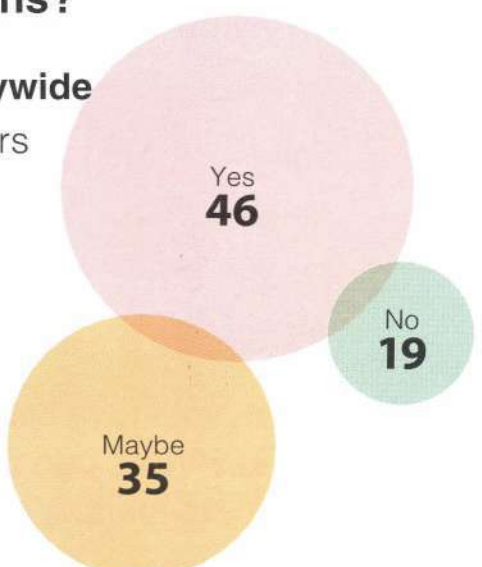
1 | Elections in Pakistan are...

1.1 Countrywide indicators



2 | Does the ECP have the independence and capacity to ensure fair and transparent elections?

2.1 Countrywide indicators



When asked whether elections in Pakistan are free, fair and/or transparent, nearly 40 per cent of respondents find that none of these attributes apply. This, however, is not the more surprising response because out of the other 60 per cent,14 per cent think that elections are fair,14 per cent believe they are free,12 per cent see them as transparent, and 20 per cent believe that they are free, fair and transparent. It is difficult to analyse this response in that these terms produce a simplistic assessment of a very complex process. Furthermore, what is

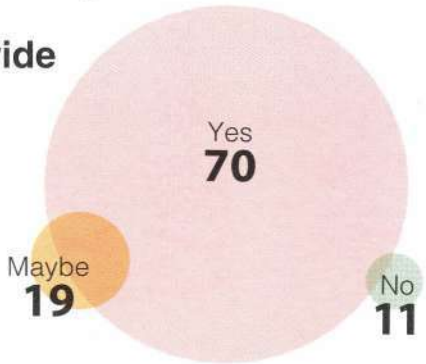
Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

3 | Are election results affected by how much money a candidate can spend?

3.1 **Countrywide** indicators

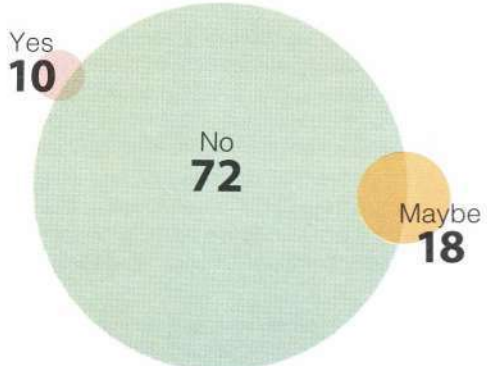
4 | Should there be stringent restrictions on how much money a candidate can spend?

4.1 Countrywide indicators



5 | Would you vote for a candidate who violates ECP rules pertaining to campaign expenditure?

5.1 **Countrywide** indicators



deemed free, fair or transparent is dependent on the observer and, therefore, relative. It is unclear whether voters assess an electoral process according to a minimalistic understanding of what constitutes free, fair and transparent. According to such an understanding, a free election is one in which the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all participants are respected. A fair election allows for a "level playing field" that is accessible to all voters, parties and candidates. Transparency would require a clear and open process that is accountable to the electorate.

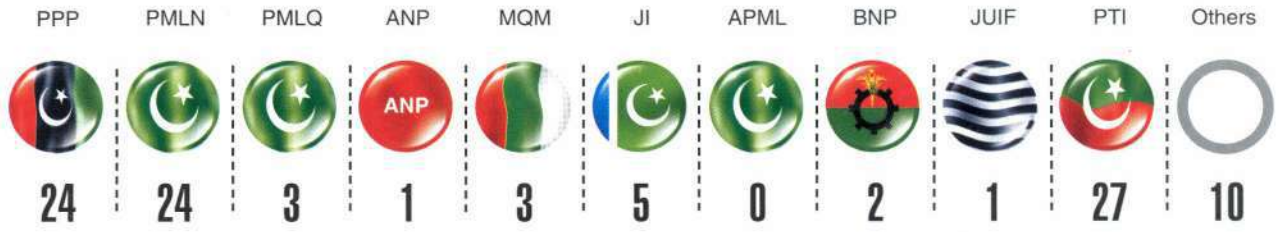
The other challenge is that although 60 per cent of the respondents believe that elections are either free, fair or transparent or all three, almost 54 per cent of the respondents do not have complete confidence in the independence and capacity of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure a transparent and fair electoral process, with 35 per cent showing uncertainty in the ECP's capacity to ensure such elections and 19 per cent saying they have no confidence in the ECP. But on a more optimistic note, more than half the respondents believe that the ECP has undertaken fairly satisfactory efforts to reform and improve the electoral process since 2008. The ECP launched a five-year Strategic Plan 2010-2014 that laid out 15 goals to increase its capacity to conduct "free, fair and impartial" elections. While the ECP has fulfilled a number of its objectives including the publication of fresh electoral rolls, the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency has assessed in August 2012 that only 40 per cent progress had

White Star

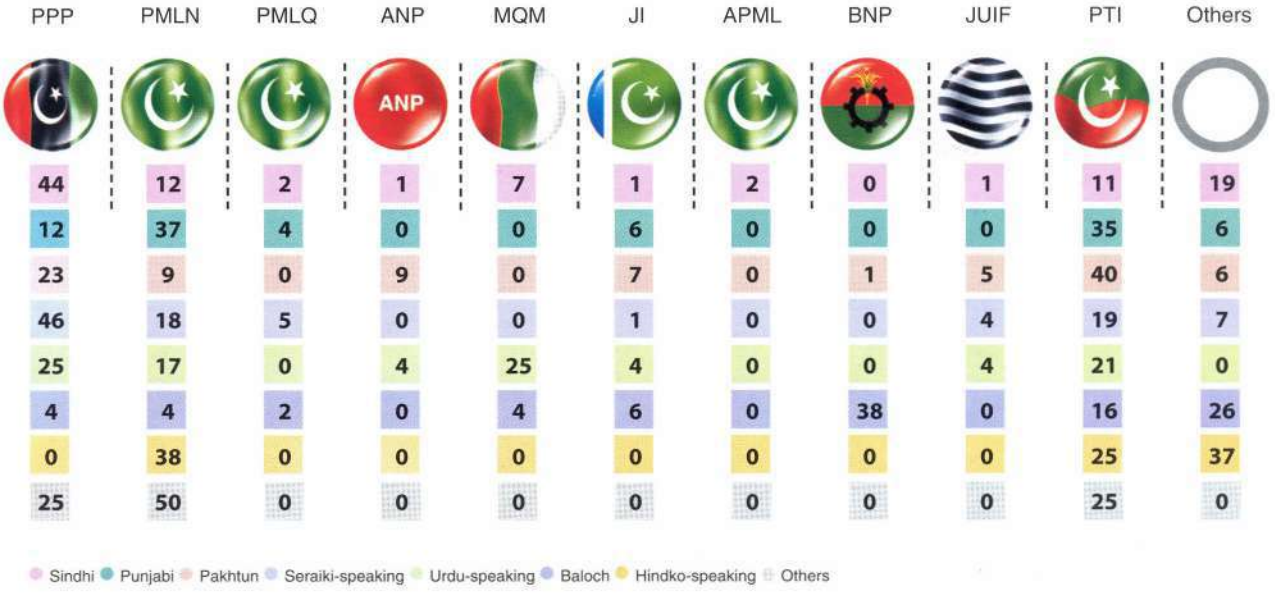
Election commission representatives conduct voter registration

6 | Which party is the most transparent while contesting elections?

6.1 Countrywide indicators



6.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



been made on the objectives of the strategic plan that were due to be completed by June 30, 2012.

The survey examines campaign finance, an aspect of the electoral process that the ECP is still in the process of reforming. Regulating campaign finance is goal number 12 in the ECP's Strategic Plan, and is conspicuous due to the lack of a given deadline to follow. With regards to this particular goal, the Code of Conduct released by the ECP for the upcoming election has banned the use of vehicles by political parties, candidates or their supporters to transport voters to polling stations on election day. The ECP has also banned the setting up of political party camps near polling stations.

More than 50 per cent of respondents think that election results are affected by how much money a candidate is able to spend. But this cannot conclusively be taken to imply that voters perceive electoral success to be positively correlated with the amount of money spent on a campaign. Nonetheless 70.5 per cent of respondents would like to see limits placed on campaign finance. A clear majority, 72 per cent of respondents claim that they would not vote for a candidate violating ECP rules pertaining to campaign expenditure. This is a problematic finding. The main concern here is to ascertain how voters intend to identify which candidates are in violation of ECP rules.

Firstly, a vast majority of voters (66 per cent) rely on television news channels or newspapers for their information. But the authenticity and effectiveness of investigative journalism on many of these news sources is debatable. Hence, voters are likely to make misinformed decisions. Secondly, an electoral campaign according to a report by the Centre for Civic Education Pakistan costs 12,629,000 rupees on average, which is already in violation of Chapter VI of the Representation of the People Act,1976. According to this act, the electoral expenses of a candidate contesting a National Assembly or Provincial Assembly seat should not exceed 1,500,000 rupees or 1,000,000 rupees, respectively. Are voters intending to punish only gross violators compared to other candidates who ran relatively modest campaigns but which were still in violation of the law?

7 | Which party is the least transparent while contesting elections?

7.1 Countrywide indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
41	16	3	3	19	2	1	0	2	5	8

7.2 Ethnicity-based indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
21	10	5	5	26	1	1	1	4	8	18
56	15	4	0	14	3	1	0	0	3	4
43	15	1	11	20	1	1	0	5	3	0
19	46	0	0	18	1	3	0	1	6	6
33	25	8	4	21	4	0	0	0	4	1
7	0	2	0	38	0	2	0	12	10	30
43	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
25	0	0	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	1

Sindhi · Punjabi · Pakhtun · Seraiki-speaking · Urdu-speaking · Baloch · Hindko-speaking · Others

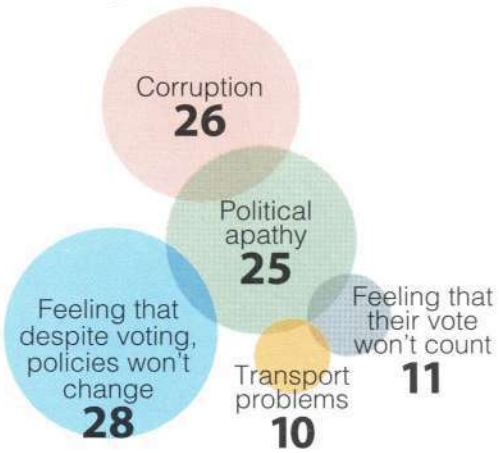
White Star

Awami National Party supporters wave the party flag at a rally

Women voters at a polling station

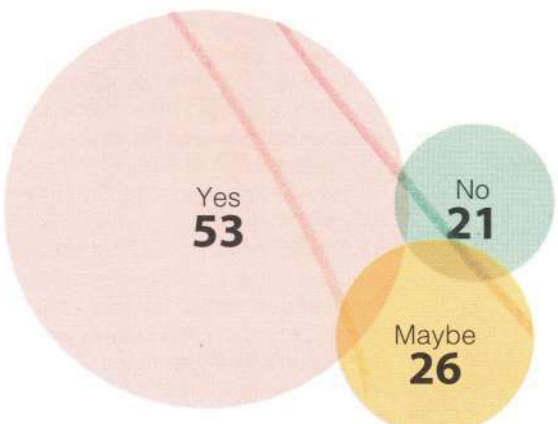
8 | What is the biggest hindrance preventing voters from casting their votes?

8.1 Countrywide indicators



9 | Will you vote in the upcoming elections even if you feel that the electoral system and process is rigged?

9.1 Countrywide indicators

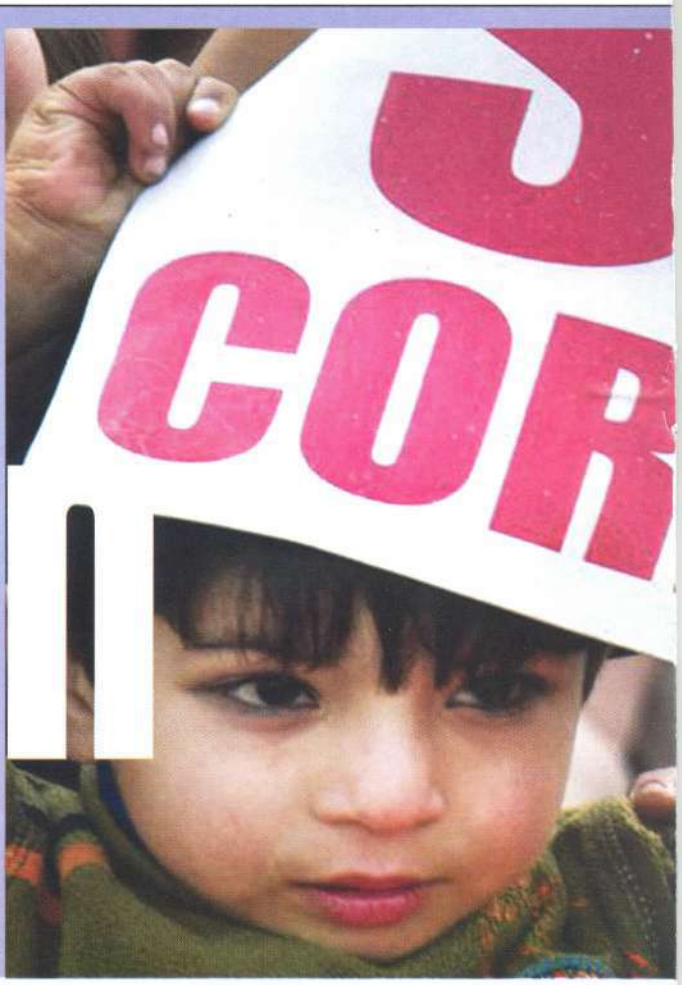


Apart from the ECP, voter perception of the transparency of political parties in running their electoral campaigns is also important to consider. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is considered by 27.2 per cent of respondents to be the party that will be most transparent whilst contesting elections. This is intriguing since voters have not yet seen the revitalised PTI contest an election. Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz is a close second with 24.3 per cent, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) a close third with 23.7 per cent of the respondents claiming that these parties are most transparent. Further, when respondents were asked which party is the least transparent, the current parties in government – the PPP and the MQM – are ranked at the top with 41 per cent and 19 per cent as the response rate respectively. These responses do not square off with the fact that the same sample of respondents considers corruption to be the second-most crucial issue after poverty confronting Pakistan today and yet 27 per cent of these individuals consider the PPP at 27.1 per cent to be the most effective party at combating these issues, while the PTI lags at 23 per cent. Yet, when respondents are asked which political party will eliminate corruption, the PTI does garner the most confidence with 34 per cent and the PPP with 22.6 per cent of the responses. It is interesting, though not surprising, to see that political parties are considered very transparent by members of their traditional constituency bases.

Finally, the legitimacy of the election is determined by whether voters believe that elections demonstrate the will of the people. When asked about the biggest hindrance preventing the voter from casting his or her vote, 28.1 per cent respond that it is the "feeling that despite their voting, policies won't change". This may be interpreted as voters not being able to differentiate among political parties on the basis of ideology or any programmatic agenda. Another 25 per cent cite political apathy as a hindrance to voting. The realisation that their vote will not effect political change has made voters apathetic and indifferent to political processes and institutions in the country. Corruption is yet another deterrent to voting according to 26.1 per cent of the voters. If corruption in the electoral process is understood as rigging, then it is remarkable that a staggering 52.9 per cent of the respondents claim that they will cast a vote even if the election is rigged. One may perceive this in a positive light that Pakistanis want to participate in an electoral process, and see it as being the first step to achieving a representative government even if it will be neither responsive nor responsible. On the other hand, a high turnout rate serves to legitimise the results of a rigged election and would indirectly reduce the incentive to inject more transparency into the electoral system. ■

By Syed Jaffar Ahmed

The real poison



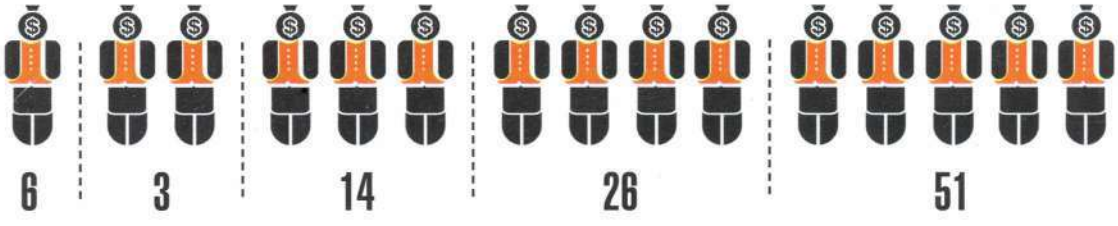
Corruption may be the most pronounced reality in Pakistan today, but it is in no way a new or recent occurrence. Pakistan has in fact grown up with it. Isn't it thought provoking that the founder of the nation in his very first speech delivered on the eve of independence spoke of it as a challenge to be faced by the new country?

In his famous speech to the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly in Karachi on August 11, 1947 – a speech otherwise always discussed for its emphasis on the equality of citizens, interpreted by many as a representation of his secular vision, but played down by others as being simply a means to pacify the communal emotions that loomed large in those days – Jinnah also spoke at length on the issue of corruption which he described as "one of the biggest curses from which India is suffering … [bribery and corruption] really is a poison. We must put that down with an iron hand and I hope that you will take adequate measures as soon as it is possible for this Assembly to do so." The difference that has occurred in the last 65 years is that while Jinnah's notion of corruption covered only bribery and black marketeering, corruption today has taken multifarious forms. That corruption is rampant in state and society is endorsed by all credible international agencies. Corruption has found its way into all walks of life and therefore all institutions – be

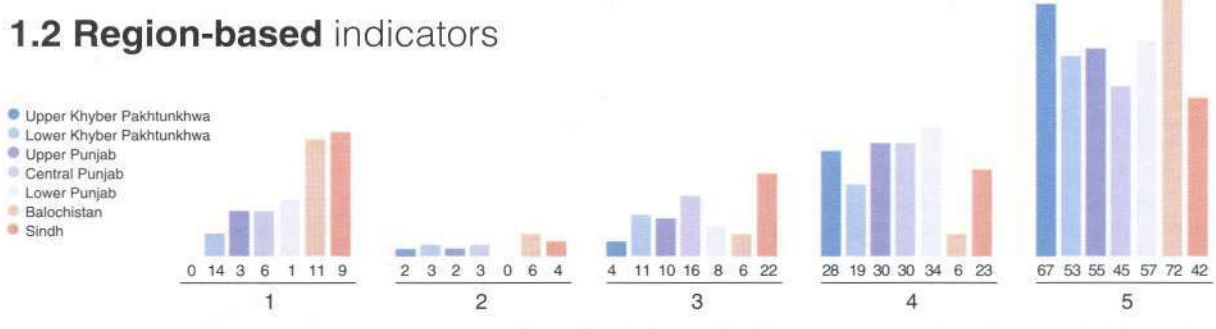
AP

1 | On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the least and 5 is the most, how rampant is corruption in Pakistan?

1.1 **Countrywide** indicators

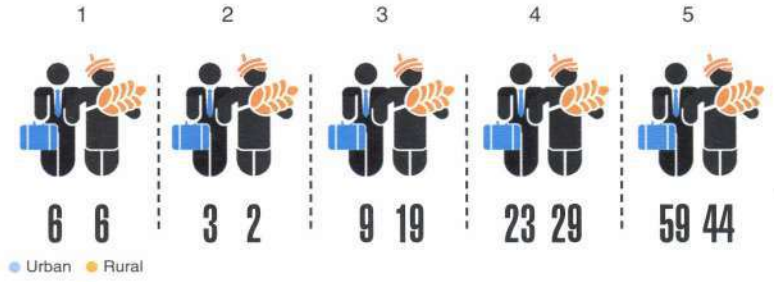


1.2 **Region-based** indicators



Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

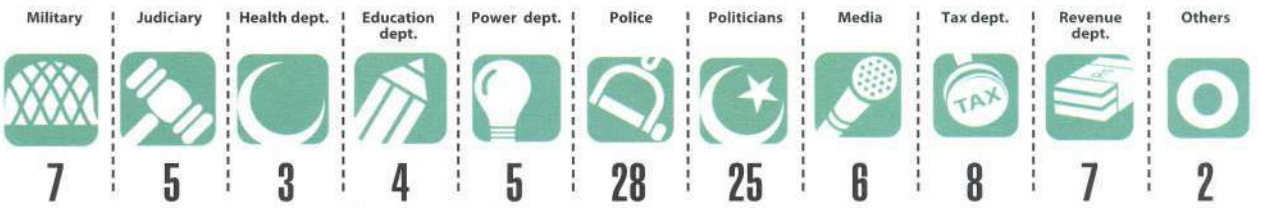
1.3 **Urban/rural** indicators



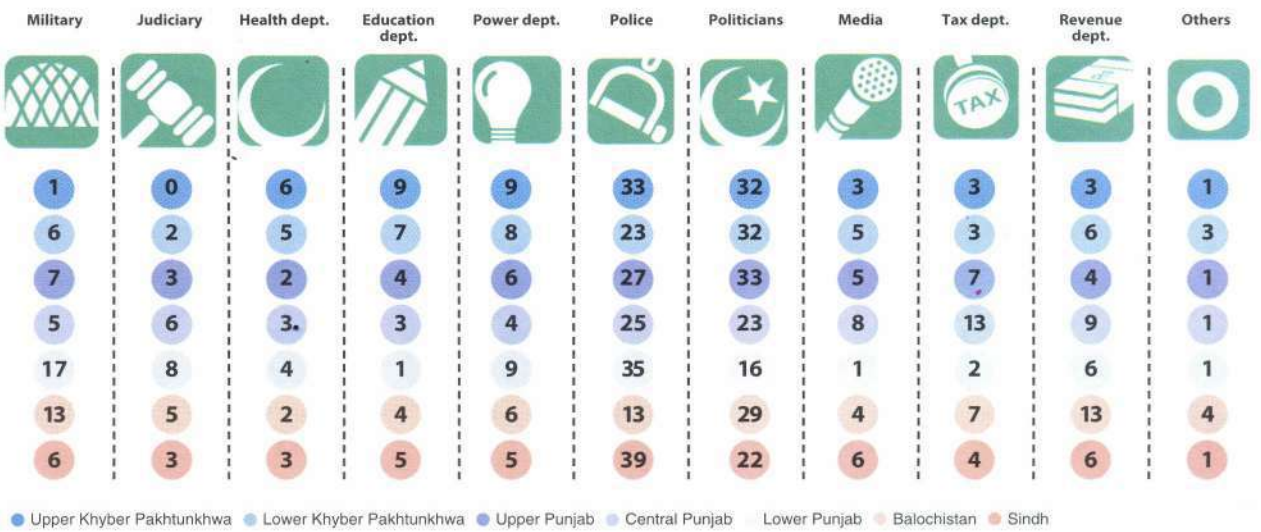
It is not that corruption has flourished in Pakistan due to the negligence of the state, or due to its weakness; it has permeated all nooks and crannies because the state's policies have, in fact, facilitated corrupt practices.

2 | Which is the most corrupt institution in Pakistan?

2.1 **Countrywide** indicators



2.2 **Region-based** indicators

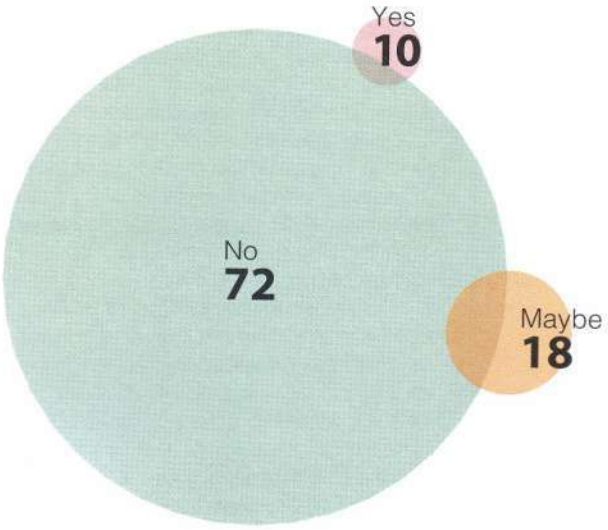


they our elected institutions, the military, bureaucracy, police, judiciary, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious organisations or educational institutions – are subject to corrupt practices, albeit in varying degrees.

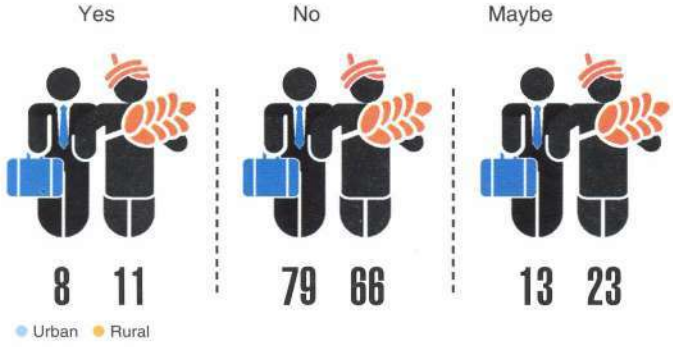
Unfortunately, there is a dearth of quality social-science research on the causes and extent of corruption in Pakistan. Scattered observations made by selected bodies and individual writers suggest a few important facts in this regard. Firstly, the state, responsible for taking legal and administrative measures to curb corruption, has instead become its most important and effective vehicle and promoter. It is not that corruption has flourished in Pakistan due to the negligence of the

3 | Should anyone have immunity from corruption trials?

3.1 Countrywide indicators



3.2 Urban/rural indicators



Survey results reveal that respondents consider the police to be the most corrupt institution in the country

state, or due to its weakness; it has permeated all nooks and crannies because the state's policies have, in fact, facilitated corrupt practices. Right from Partition, the race for evacuee property, the bonus voucher scheme introduced by the Ayub regime, the distribution of prized lands to military and civilian officers, the whitening of black money during the Zia regime, and the distribution of development funds among legislators — these are some of the major policy decisions taken at the level of the state which has institutionalised corruption in the country. Those who were excluded by the state from its network of institutionalised corruption discovered their own means.

The cumulative effect of the causes of corruption is that the phenomenon has now become part of the system. The fact that corruption has become a structural reality also suggests that it may not be addressed by planting one or two or more honest individuals in different departments without addressing the essence of the problem.

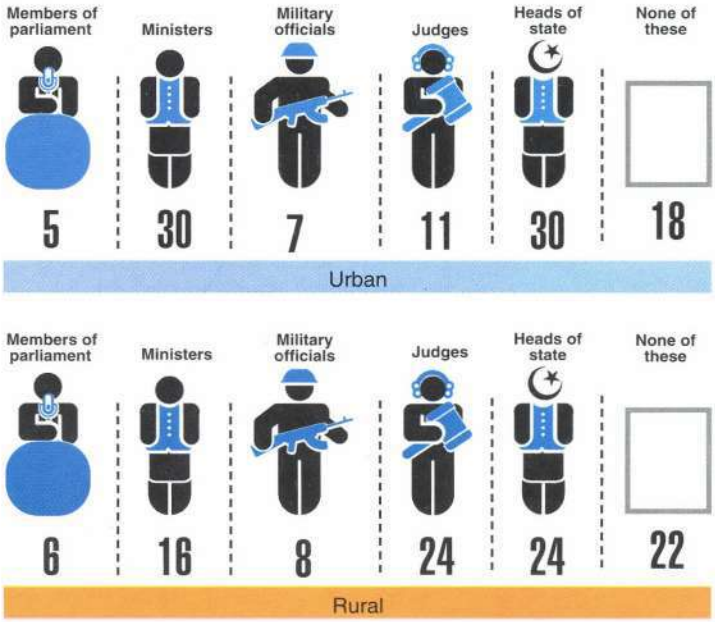
How has Pakistani society responded to the reality of corruption? The Political Barometer indicates two trends: while a segment of the population opposes it to varying degrees, others not only accept this reality but are also adjusting to it, and this too to varying degrees.

As regards the general perception of Pakistanis on how rampant corruption has become, more than 50 per cent of survey respondents rank it at the highest level. 26.3 per cent believe that it is rampant but rank it at less than the maximum extent. There are also those who state that the level of corruption in the country is low, but at 6.3 per cent, the percentage of such respondents is relatively small. The highest percentage of respondents who perceive corruption as being extremely rampant in Pakistan are to be found in Balochistan, where 72 per cent of respondents share this assessment. This is followed by upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 67 per cent, with this perception prevailing least among respondents in Sindh at 42 per cent. Perceptions of the highest degree of corruption appear to be correlated with income, with middle and upper income groups showing a greater

4 | If yes, who amongst the following should have immunity from corruption trials?

4.1 Countrywide indicators

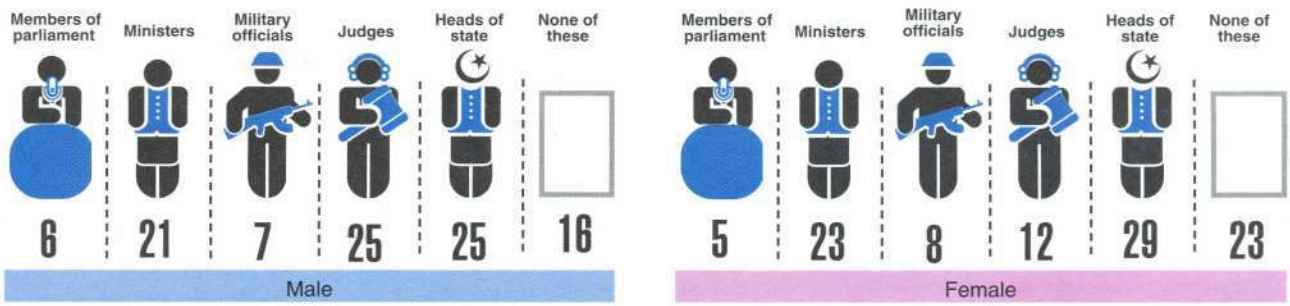
4.2 Urban/rural indicators



tendency to share this perception. This seems to be so because this segment of society has greater exposure to prevalent practices. This perception is also rather high in urban areas at 59 per cent as compared to rural areas at 44 per cent. This again seems to be the result of urban dwellers coming into greater contact with corruption in offices of institutions like the police, tax and revenue departments, etc. This trend is also mirrored with regard to education levels, with less educated persons perceiving corruption to be less extreme than those with higher levels of education. This suggests that education does provide more awareness into corrupt practices.

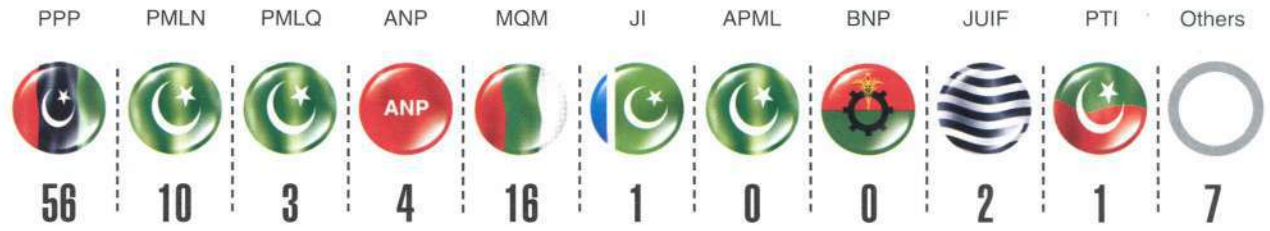
In response to the question of which institution in Pakistan is the most corrupt, the majority of respondents across the country identify the police at 28.4 per cent. This is followed by politicians at 25.2 per cent, the tax department at 8.1 per cent, and the revenue department at 7.1 per cent. The health department is seen as most corrupt by the smallest percentage of respondents at 3.2 per cent. A slightly higher percentage of female respondents find the police and politicians to be most corrupt as compared to male respondents. More male respondents, in turn, see the military and judiciary as being the most corrupt than do women who responded to the same question. A region-wise break-up of perceptions shows that out of the seven identified regions, the police is ranked first by the majority of people in four regions and politicians are ranked first in three. A higher percentage of urban respondents view politicians as being the most corrupt than those who view the police in this light; in rural areas, we see the police outstripping politicians in this respect.

4.3 Gender-based indicators



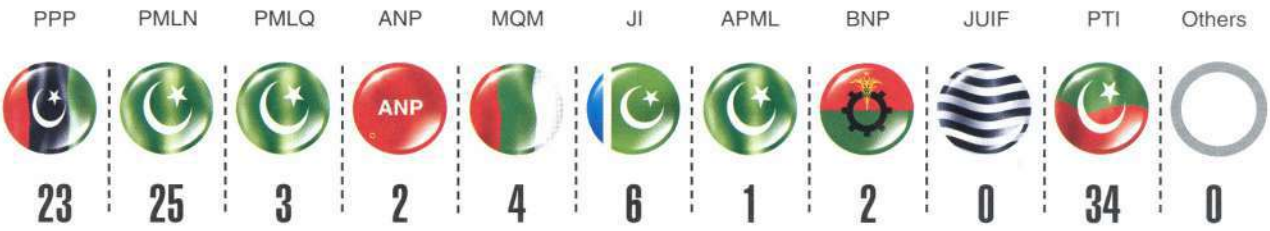
5 | Which political party, in your opinion, is the most corrupt?

5.1 Countrywide indicators

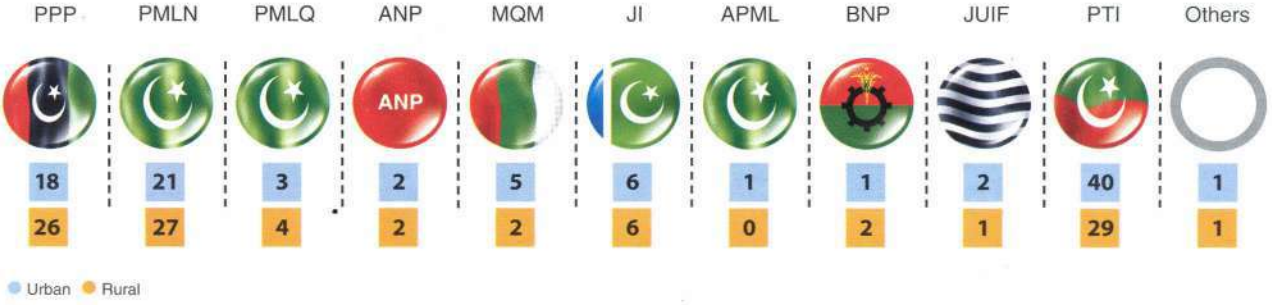


6 | Which political party, if it comes into power, can reduce or end corruption?

6.1 Countrywide indicators



6.2 Urban/rural indicators

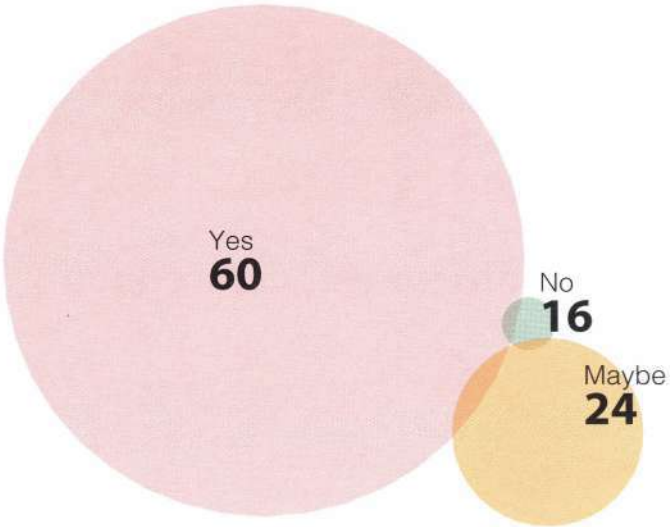


The debate over immunity from trial [for those accused of corruption] has is ongoing. Seventy two per cent of respondents are unwilling to exempt anyone in this matter; only 9.8 per cent consider immunity as permissible, while 18 per cent are undecided. The region most in favour of not allowing immunity is upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (89 per cent), followed by lower Punjab (82 per cent) and then lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (80 per cent). The level of indecisiveness over the matter of immunity is highest in Sindh where 34 per cent of respondents withhold an unequivocal opinion, followed by Balochistan at 21 per cent and central Punjab at 16 per cent. There appears to be a correlation between the level of education and an unwillingness to allow immunity in corruption cases. This same direct relationship also holds true for a rise in income level. Rural respondents were relatively less opposed to the granting of immunity as opposed to urban respondents. Again, this trend matches with higher income and levels of education as mentioned above.

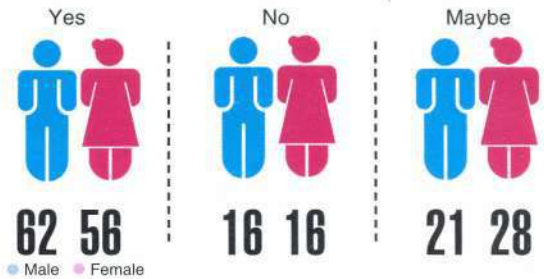
Out of the relatively limited number of respondents

7 | Will your vote be based on levels of corruption within a political party?

7.1 **Countrywide** indicators



7.2 **Gender-based** indicators



The state, responsible to institute legal and administrative measures to curb corruption, instead became its most important and effective vehicle and promoter.

who are willing to consider certain individuals as being exempt from corruption trials, 26.6 per cent think that immunity should be afforded to the heads of state; this is followed by ministers at 21.7 per cent and then judges at 18.9 per cent. More men are in favour of disallowing immunity at 75 per cent, while women appear comparatively more willing to do so in disfavouring immunity at 68 per cent. Women also appear more inclined to favour immunity for heads of state and ministers as compared to men, who are more likely to favour judges in this respect. Rural respondents also favour judges to a greater degree, while urban respondents are inclined to be less hard on heads of state and ministers in relative terms. This is rather surprising given the continuous campaign against presidential immunity on television channels and the Supreme Court's insistence that the government should write to the Swiss courts to follow up on cases against President Asif Zardari.

As regards opinions on which political party is the most corrupt, out of the 10 political parties specifically mentioned in the survey questionnaire, countrywide responses primarily identify the PPP as being the most corrupt at 55.6 per cent, followed by the MQM at 15.7 per cent and then the PMLN at 10.4 per cent. The PPP tops the list because it is currently in government. Its coalition partner finds second place due to the same reason. PMLN runs the Punjab government, so it also comes in for a significant share in the respondents' perceptions regarding corrupt political practices. In response to the corresponding question of which party is the least corrupt, the highest score goes to PTI at 32.2 per cent, perhaps because it has never been in power and because it has spoken so loudly against the alleged corruption of the ruling elite. This is followed by the PMLN at 19.9 per cent and then the PPP at 14.3 per cent.

Further exploring people's expectations from political parties, 34 per cent believe that the PTI can reduce or bring an end to corruption, followed by the PMLN at 24.5 per cent, the PPP at 22.6 per cent and then the Jamaat-e-Islami at just six per cent.

When asked whether their vote would be based on the levels of corruption within a political party, 60 per cent of respondents state that it would. This data indicates that corruption among electoral candidates and contesting parties is not a huge source of concern for the latter as 40 per cent of all respondents are still in no clear 'Yes' position. Men are more inclined to answer in the affirmative at 62 per cent than women at 56 per cent; women also display a rather higher level of indecision. The region most likely to consider how corrupt a party is before voting is upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 76 per cent, followed by upper Punjab at 70 per cent, central Punjab and lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa both at 60 per cent, Sindh at 56 per cent, Balochistan at 52 per cent, and lastly, lower Punjab at 49 per cent. If one looks at income levels, there seems to be no clear trend or relationship between choosing to vote for a candidate and the level of corruption within his/her party. Rural respondents at 61 per cent are slightly more inclined to take corruption into account while voting than urban respondents at 57 per cent. ■

By Abid Suleri

Talking points

Religious harmony

More than 80 per cent of respondents disfavour voting for parties campaigning on a sectarian agenda.

Economy

There is consensus among the respondents that unemployment and energy shortage are the two biggest economic issues facing Pakistan today.

Respondents rate corruption, incompetent leadership, and poor governance as the biggest hurdles in the country's economic growth, in that order, with energy shortage following close behind.

The majority – albeit by a slim margin – is of the view that expenditure in the defence sector should be reduced, while education and health sectors budgets should be increased.

Around three fourths of respondents earning up to 100,000 rupees a month agree that sexually explicit content in newspapers, television channels and the Internet should be banned.

Elections

More than half the respondents think that electoral results are affected by the amount of money a candidate can spend.

Interprovincial relations

Punjab is perceived to be the most privileged province receiving more benefits from the central government than any other federating unit in Pakistan.

Balochistan is viewed as the most deprived province in Pakistan, receiving less benefits from the central government than any other province.

Minimum support for the creation of new provinces, seen through income-wise indicators, stands at 28 per cent. But this goes up to 50 per cent for middle income groups (earning 45,000-65,000 rupees a month).

The feeling that water, power, and food are not distributed equitably among all provinces is the strongest in the middle income group (earning 30,000-100,000 rupees a month).

Where electricity, gas and water shortages are concerned, at least 10 to15 per cent of respondents from all income groups feel that their province faces each of these problems more than do other provinces.

The feeling that provinces should have more autonomy in running their social, cultural, economic, industrial, educational and medical affairs is strongest among respondents belonging to income groups with monthly earnings of 30,000 rupees or higher.

Foreign affairs

Thirty eight per cent of respondents say they would prefer to vote for a party that maintains a neutral stance towards the US.

Nearly one third of the survey respondents are against Pakistan having strategic alliance with the US while almost the same number are in favour of it.

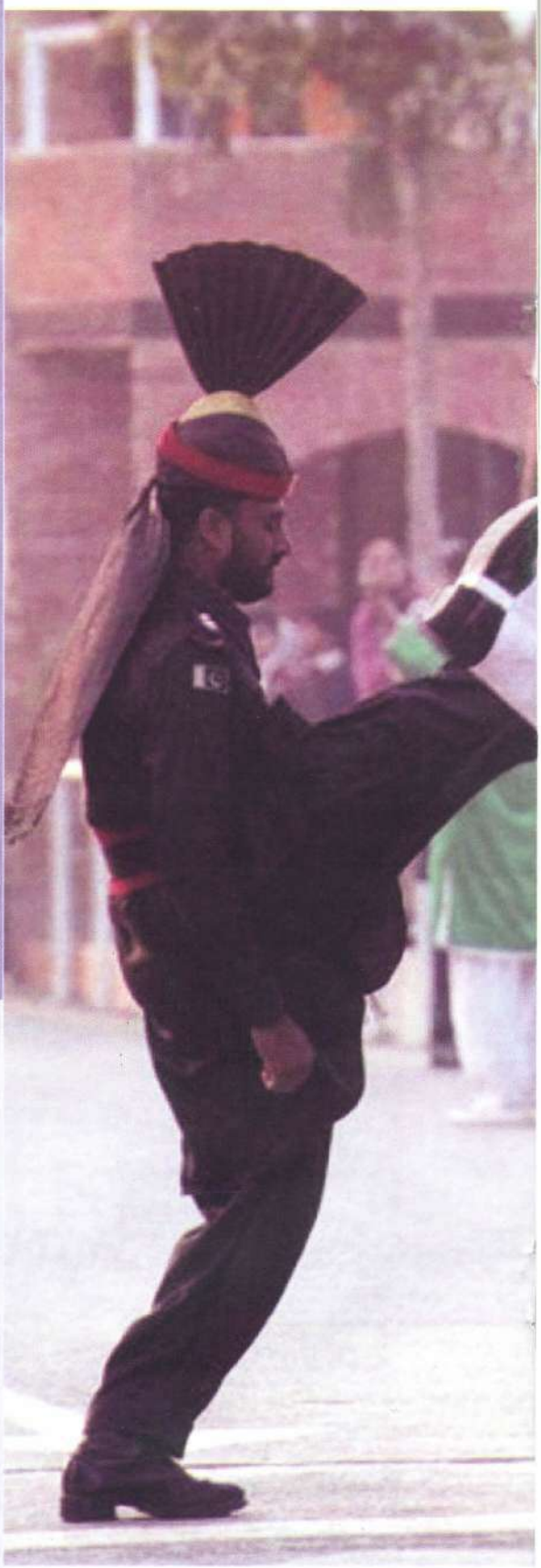
A slim majority of respondents see China and Saudi Arabia as being Pakistan's most beneficial allies.

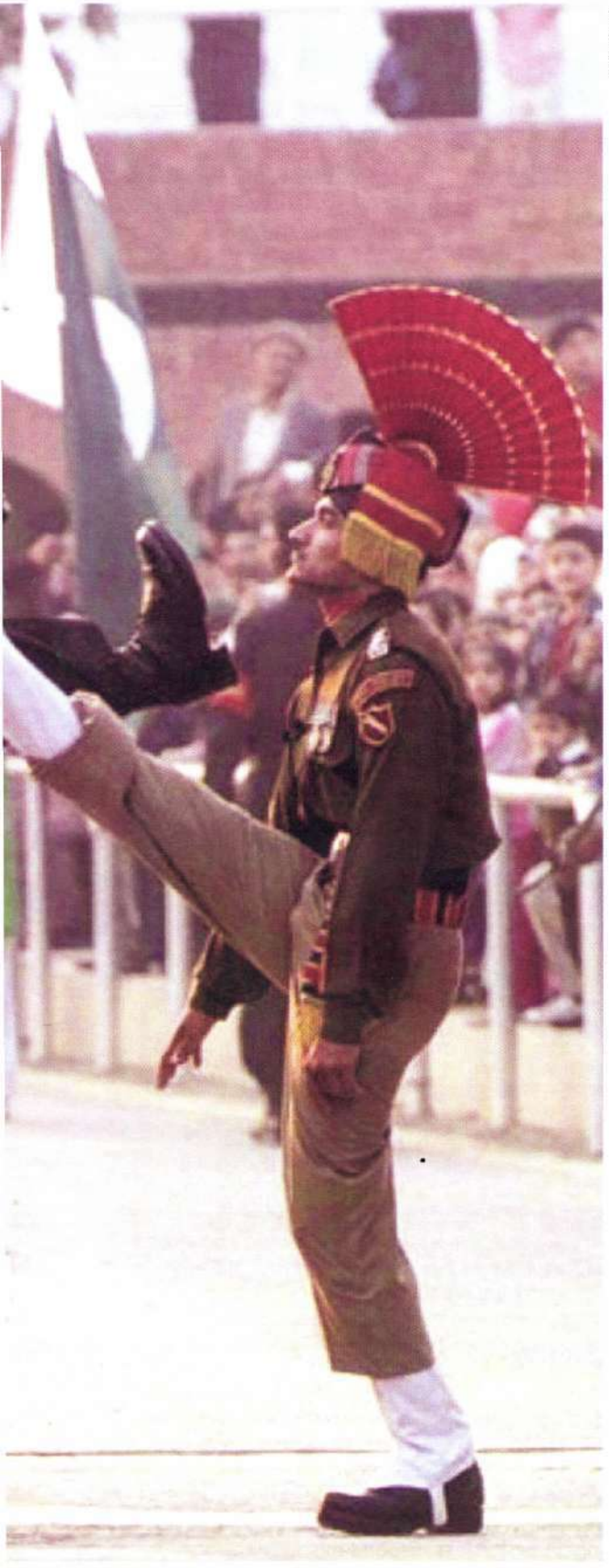
There is a vast consensus that Pakistan should have stronger ties with Muslim countries.

By C Christine Fair

In a world of our own

In principle, the results of the next election will be important for Pakistan and its key foreign relations. While the army continues to dominate Pakistan's foreign relations, over the past five years politicians have had carved out for themselves an increasing role in shaping the possible outcomes within which the army can operate. The army's ability to call the shots remains intact, but its ability to run roughshod over political preferences is more constrained than ever before. The next constitutionally elected government, with its ever more legitimate mandate to govern, is likely to exert itself increasingly in foreign relations. Much is at stake for the government, the political institutions, the people, and – as always – the army.

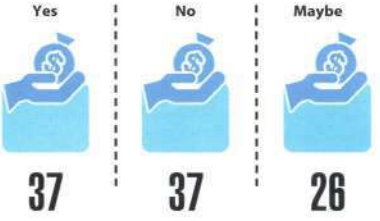




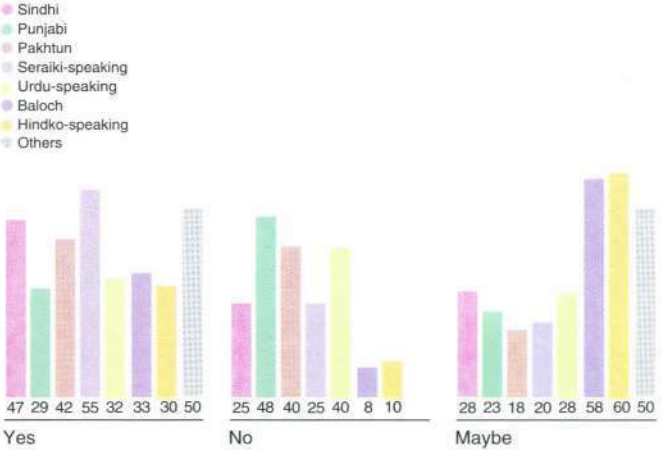
White Star

1 | Does Pakistan require foreign aid?

1.1 Countrywide indicators



1.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



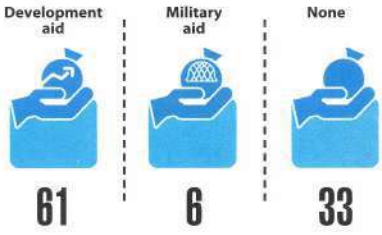
Given the expanding role that politics has assumed over the last five years, the inputs and preferences of the Pakistani voter too have assumed unprecedented importance. To gauge public sentiment on a range of pressing foreign policy issues, the Herald's Political Barometer asked respondents several questions regarding Pakistan's relations in a global context.

Views about foreign aid

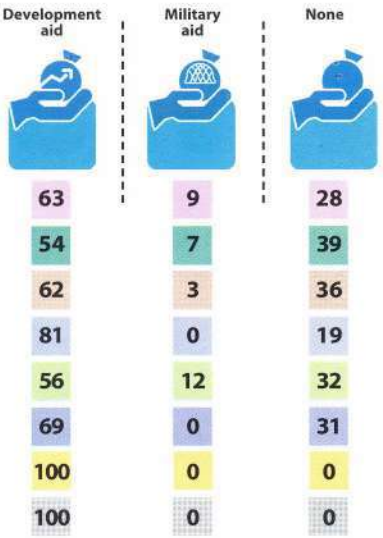
Overall, Pakistanis seem deeply divided about whether or not their country requires foreign aid with roughly the same proportion of respondents answering 'Yes' as those answering 'No' at 36.8 and 37.3 per cent respectively. Another one in four say 'Maybe'. However, there are very important differences across Pakistan's ethnic groups — Punjabis at 48 per cent are the more likely to say 'No', whereas Seraiki-speakers at 55 per cent are the most likely to say 'Yes'. A majority of Hindko-speakers and the Baloch are uncertain. Among those who do believe Pakistan requires foreign assistance, the vast majority think the country needs development aid rather than military aid. Across all ethnic groups, military aid has the highest support among Urdu-speakers at 12 per cent.

2 | What type of foreign assistance is most beneficial to Pakistan?

2.1 Countrywide indicators



2.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



Sindhi Punjabi Pakhtun Seraiki-speaking Urdu-speaking Baloch Hindko-speaking Others

Hina Rabbani Khar, Pakistan's foreign minister with Hillary Clinton, the former US Secretary of State

Pakistan-US relations

The US and Pakistan have a long and tortured history going back to the mid-1950s. Disappointments have been numerous on both sides. To gauge Pakistanis' beliefs about the US, respondents are asked "Should Pakistan have a strong strategic alliance with the United States?" Respondents are similarly in disagreement with nearly one-third saying 'Yes', another third saying 'No', and the remainder saying 'Maybe'. Across the country, there is no consensus about this vexing alliance. In fact, there is very little variation by age or gender. However, the answers vary widely across Pakistan's ethnic groups. Punjabis and Pakhtuns are more likely to say 'No' at 44 per cent and 41 per cent respectively, Urdu-speakers and Sindhis are more likely to support this alliance at 50 per cent and 43 per cent respectively and the Baloch are most likely to be uncertain about this with 74 per cent saying 'Maybe'.

Drones remain a contentious issue

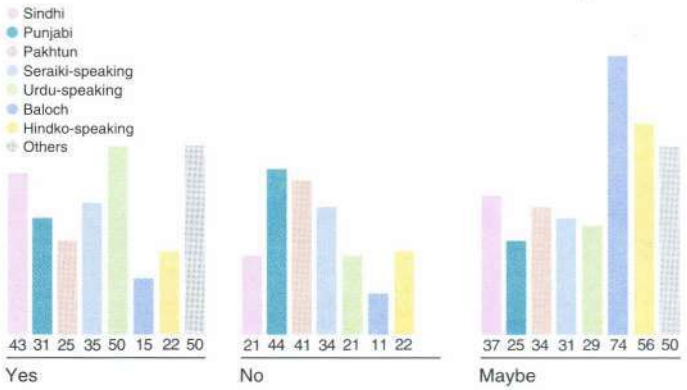
While the US began using drones in Pakistan during the presidencies of George W Bush and General (retd) Pervez Musharraf, President Barack Obama has escalated their use. Pakistanis are uncertain about the degree of cooperation that their own civilian, military and intelligence agencies provide to the US drones. With both governments refusing to be transparent, reports of civilian casualties flame the anger of many Pakistanis against the US.

To better understand Pakistanis' views on drones, respondents are asked: "Are drone strikes an acceptable course of action against the Taliban and al-Qaeda?" A majority at 57.3 per cent say 'No'. However, a sizeable minority at 25.2 per cent think they are acceptable and another 17.5 per cent answer 'Maybe'. The youngest and oldest respondents from the age brackets of 18 to 35 years and of 70 years and above

3 | Do you think Pakistan should have a strong strategic alliance with the United States?

3.1 Countrywide indicators

3.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



are more likely to reject them (both at around 60 per cent). However, compared with other age groups, the oldest respondents are also more ambivalent with one in four saying 'Maybe'. Much more variation is evident across the ethnic groups. Urdu speakers and Sindhis are much more likely to support drone strikes at 48 per cent and 43 per cent respectively, while Punjabis, Hindko-speakers and Pakhtuns are most likely to reject them at 73 per cent, 70 per cent and 67 per cent respectively. The Baloch are most likely to be undecided with 44 per cent responding to the question of acceptability of drone strikes with 'Maybe'.

When asked whether or not drone attacks are an infringement upon Pakistan's sovereignty, the overwhelming majority at 69.6 per cent says 'Yes'; however, more than one in ten say that they are not an infringement and nearly one in five answer 'Maybe'. While there was some minimal variation by age and gender, the most striking variation was again across ethnic groups. Urdu-speakers, Seraiki-speakers, and the Baloch are more likely to reject the claim that drone strikes violate Pakistan's sovereignty at 40 per cent, 26 per cent and 25 per cent respectively whereas Hindko-speakers and Punjabis at 90 per cent and 84 per cent overwhelmingly believe that drone attacks are a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. The Baloch, again, are the most likely at 56 per cent to offer the ambivalent response of 'Maybe'.

While the majority of survey respondents oppose drones on both questions, clearly there are important minority voices on this controversial issue which are generally unacknowledged.

Foreign militants and the question of sovereignty

Drones are not the only possible affront to Pakistani sovereignty. Pakistan and the world have been focused on the foreign militants tied to an array of international Islamist terrorist and insurgent organisations that are ensconced in Pakistan's territory. To understand the gravity with which Pakistanis view this enduring situation, respondents were asked whether or not "foreign militants operating from or within Pakistan" infringe upon the state's sovereignty.

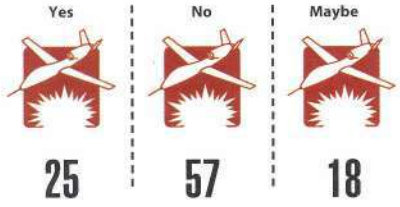
Surprisingly, the respondents are much more likely to see foreign militants as an infringement than they do drones (80 per cent for foreign militants, 69.6 per cent for drones). Almost five per cent do not believe that foreign militants violate Pakistan's sovereignty while another 15.1 per cent answer 'Maybe'. Interestingly, the oldest respondents (from the age group 70 years and above) are most adamant in this view with 93.5 per cent of them saying 'Yes'. While gender differences are modest, ethnicity accounts for much more variation. Pakhtuns and Seraiki-speakers are more likely than other Pakistanis to see them as violating Pakistan's rule at 87 and 86 per cent respectively whereas the Baloch are much less likely at 59 per cent to have this view and, as with other questions, the Baloch are also more likely to say 'Maybe' at 41 per cent.

Relations with India

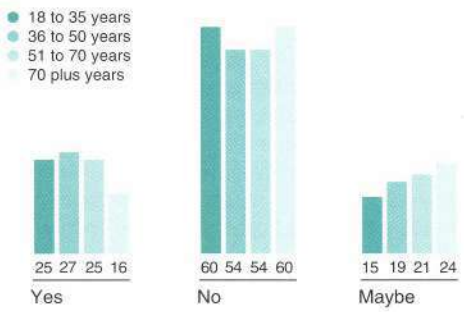
Over the last two years, Pakistan and India have made important strides in improving their economic relations. In 2011, Pakistan offered India the "most favoured nation" (MFN) status. India granted Pakistan the same status much earlier in 1996. Respondents are asked whether or not Pakistan should have reciprocated the Indian move. The plurality of respondents at 43.1 per cent believe that Pakistan should not have done so, with 27.5 per cent saying 'Yes' and another 29.4 per cent saying 'Maybe'. There is some age variation, with persons of 70 years of age or older being somewhat more supportive, at 33.3 per cent, than the average and such persons are also somewhat less likely to say 'Maybe' at 24.4 per cent.

4 Are drone attacks an acceptable course of action against the Taliban and al-Qaeda?

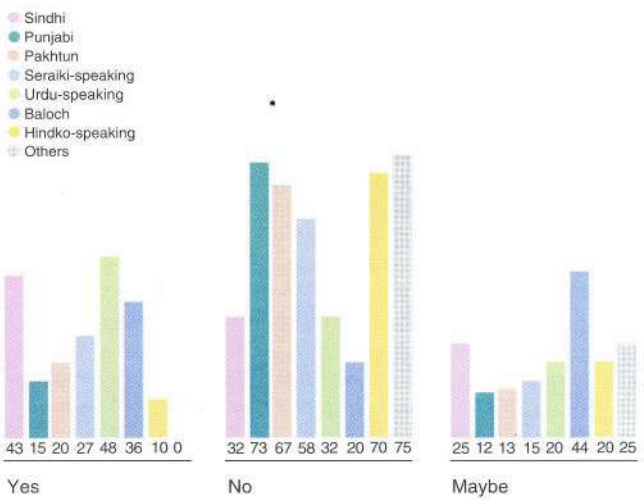
4.1 Countrywide indicators



4.2 Age-wise indicators



4.3 Ethnicity-based indicators



Women were somewhat less likely to say 'Yes' and somewhat more likely to be ambivalent. As with other questions, most of the interesting variations can be observed across ethnic groups. Urdu-speakers, Seraiki-speakers, the Baloch and Sindhis are more likely to support granting India the MFN status at 46 per cent, 45 per cent, 44 per cent and 41 per cent respectively whereas opposition is most intense among Punjabis at 62 per cent. Hindko-speakers and Pakhtuns are more likely to be ambivalent at 70 per cent and 52 per cent. The majority of Baloch are also more likely to be ambivalent at 52 per cent.

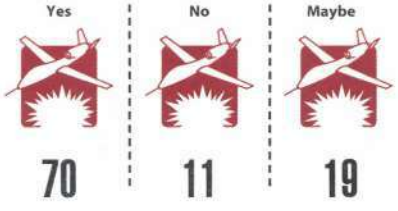
Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan have historically had vexed relations stemming from the early days of Pakistan's independence, when Afghanistan was the only state to reject Pakistan's admission to the United Nations. Afghanistan – as well as the US and others – continually complain that Pakistan interferes aggressively in Afghanistan. They point to Pakistan's period of overt support to the Pakhtun Islamist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar during the early 1990s and later for the Taliban until 2001. Pakistan continues to sustain criticism that it still supports the Afghan Taliban and allied groups such as Jalaluddin Haqqani, even though Pakistan has been a critical partner for the West in the war against al-Qaeda. While the US plans to withdraw from Afghanistan, Pakistani policymakers have tough choices ahead of them.

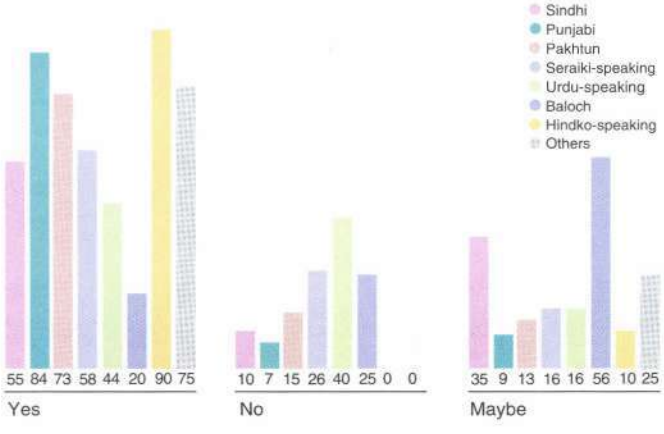
To understand how potential voters feel about Pakistan's Afghanistan policy, respondents were asked: "Should Pakistan actively promote a government favourable to its own interests in Afghanistan?" Respondents are at odds on this issue with roughly a third of persons giving each of the three options – 'Yes', 'No' and 'Maybe' – in response. The oldest respondents are both most likely to support such activism at 39.1 per cent and also to be ambivalent about the same at 37 per cent. In contrast, the youngest are most likely to reject proactive efforts at 37.5 per cent. Men are somewhat more likely than women to disapprove of proactive engagement at 37.9 per cent versus 32 per cent. Turning to the considerable ethnic differences, Urdu-speakers, Seraiki-speakers and Sindhis are most supportive of Pakistani activism to secure its interests in Afghanistan at 76 per cent, 55 per cent and 41 per cent whereas the Baloch and Punjabis are most opposed

5 | Are drone attacks an infringement on Pakistan's sovereignty?

5.1 **Countrywide** indicators



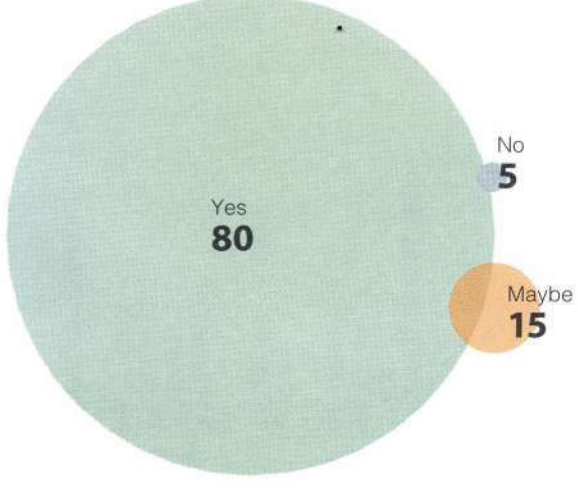
5.2 **Ethnicity-based** indicators



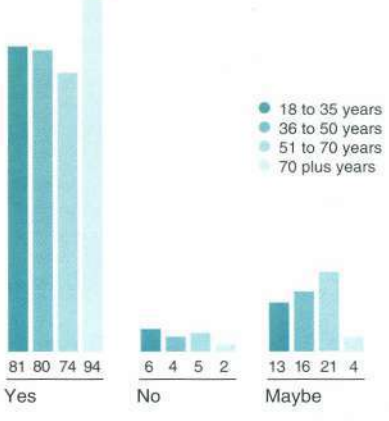
When asked whether or not drone attacks are an infringement upon Pakistan's sovereignty, the overwhelming majority at 69.6 per cent says 'Yes'; however, more than one in ten say that they are not an infringement and nearly one in five answer 'Maybe'.

6 | Are foreign militants operating from or within Pakistan infringing Pakistan's sovereignty?

6.1 **Countrywide** indicators



6.2 **Age-wise** indicators



to it at 53 per cent and 46 per cent. Hindko-speakers are overwhelmingly uncertain about the best way forward with 60 per cent indicating 'Maybe'.

Pakistan engaging the world

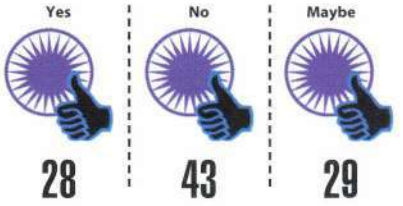
In recent years, Pakistan's foreign relations have been important sources of military and economic assistance as well as diplomatic and political support for its regional concerns. To gain insight into which countries Pakistanis view as most beneficial to their country, survey participants were asked to indicate which country was the best for Pakistan from among a series of options: China, India, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the US as well as countries associated with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and a category called "Muslim countries". Curiously, despite much of the praise that China sustains in Pakistan for being Pakistan's all-weather friend, it does not fare terribly better than the other individual countries or groups of countries. While China tops the list with 14.9 per cent of the respondents identifying it as the 'most beneficial', the other countries and groups of countries, including the US, draw similar shares at roughly 11 to 13 per cent.

Having said that, the majority of respondents feel – with little variation across age and gender – Pakistan should pursue better ties with Muslim countries at 88.2 per cent. There was comparatively less ethnic variation on this question than on the others, with one notable exception: the Baloch were clearly less enthusiastic at 54 per cent and were also more likely at 43 per cent to be uncertain about the value of such overtures to Muslim countries.

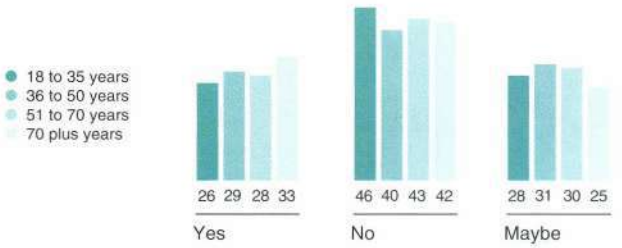
There is somewhat less enthusiasm for Pakistan pursuing better ties with SAARC countries with 74.4 per cent saying 'Yes', 4 per cent saying 'No', and 21.6 per cent saying 'Maybe'. The youngest respondents at 77.3 per cent are more enthusiastic and support such efforts while the oldest respondents at 63 per cent are less likely to support the strengthening of ties with SAARC countries. Men are somewhat more likely than women to support this outreach at 76.9 per cent versus 71.3 per cent. Ethnic variation is generally low; however, the Baloch, as elsewhere, are less likely to support stronger ties as 51 per cent respond with 'Yes' and 49 per cent with 'Maybe'.

7 | Should Pakistan have granted India the 'most favoured nation' status?

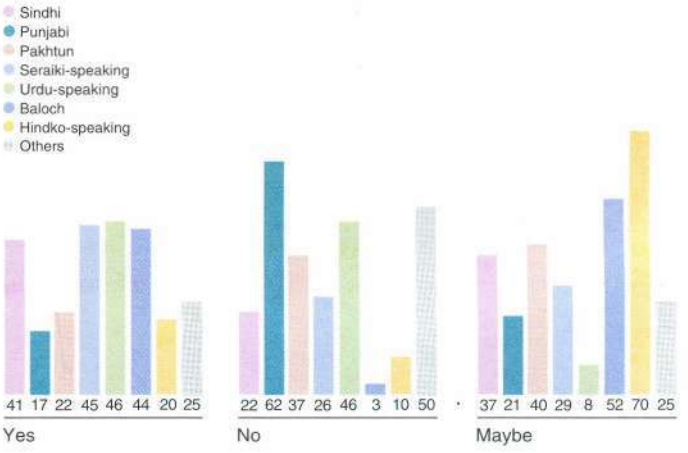
7.1 Countrywide indicators

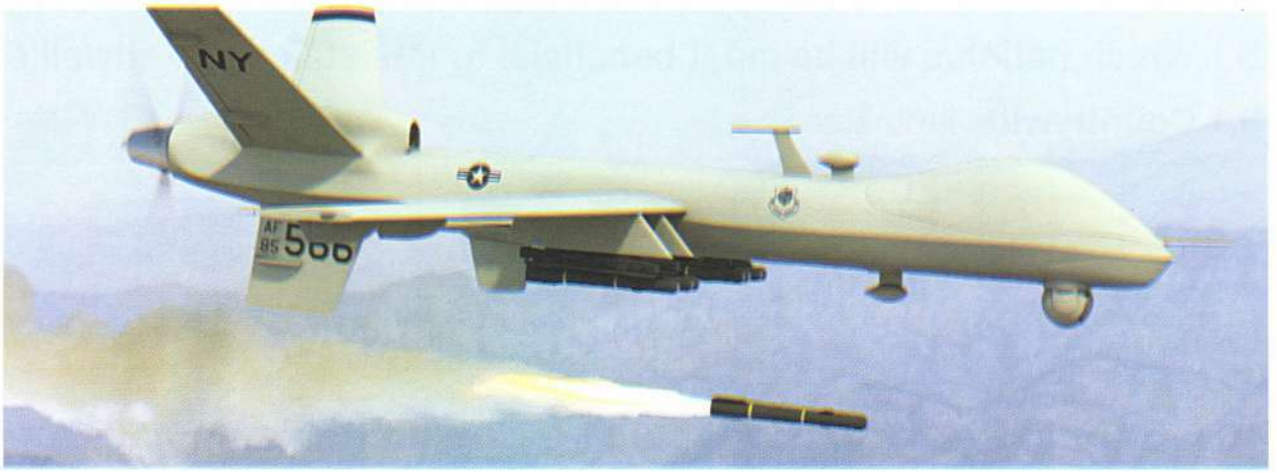


7.2 Age-wise indicators



7.3 Ethnicity-based indicators



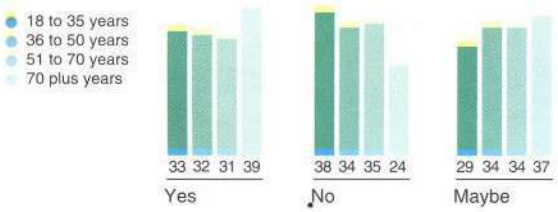


Pakistanis are uncertain about the degree of cooperation that their own civilian, military and intelligence agencies provide to US drone attacks

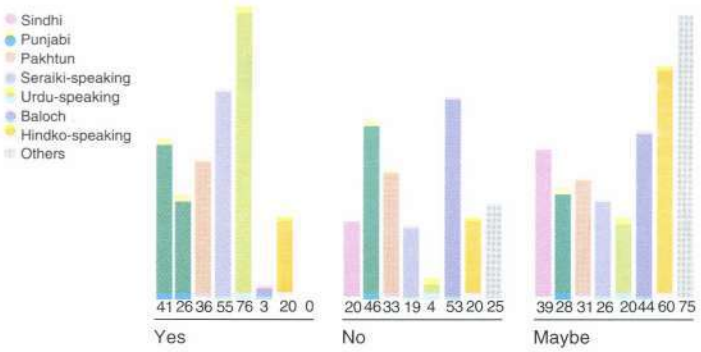
8 | Should Pakistan actively promote a government favourable to its own interests in Afghanistan?

8.1 Countrywide indicators

8.2 Age-wise indicators



8.3 Ethnicity-based indicators



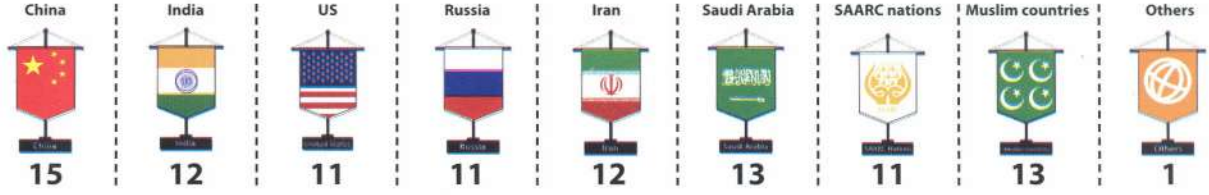
Political parties and foreign affairs

With elections looming, respondents were asked which party they believe would "handle Pakistan's foreign affairs in the best possible manner". Both the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PMLN) have the most support with roughly 30 per cent. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has the support of 21.3 per cent of the survey sample. Other parties all draw support in the single digits. However, among the youngest survey participants (18 to 35 years), the competition is much tighter with the PPP, PMLN and PTI drawing the support of 26 per cent, 31 per cent and 23 per cent of participants respectively. The older respondents (70 years and above) are more likely to support the PMLN at 41 per cent and the least likely to support the PTI. There is little noteworthy variance between men and women. As would be expected, there is interesting ethnic variation. The PPP fares best among Sindhis, Seraiki-speakers and Urdu-speakers at 51 per cent, 49 per cent and 48 per cent. The PMLN does the best among Punjabis at 45 per cent and the PTI garners the most support among Pakhtuns, Hindko-speakers and Punjabis at 36 per cent, 30 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

Interestingly, when respondents were asked to say which party would handle Pakistan's foreign affairs in

9 | Which nation/s will be most beneficial to Pakistan as its ally/allies?

9.1 Countrywide indicators



10 | Should Pakistan have stronger ties with Muslim countries?

10.1 Countrywide indicators

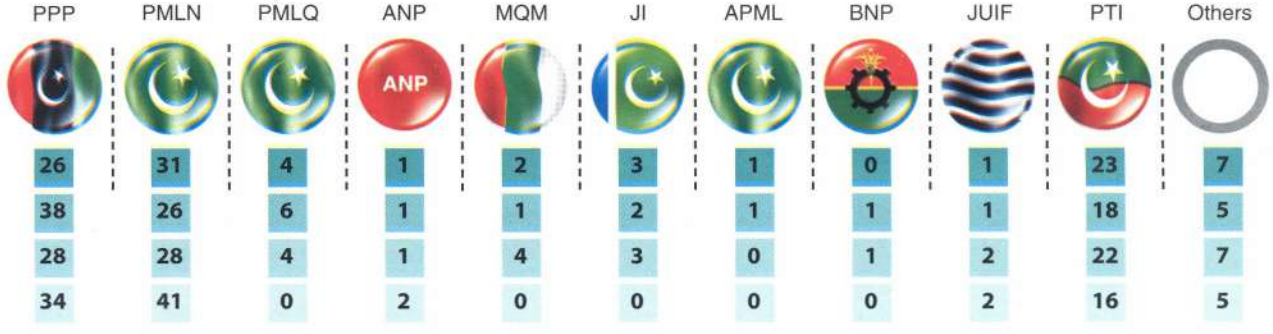
11 | Should Pakistan have stronger ties with SAARC nations?

11.1 Countrywide indicators

11 | Which party will handle Pakistan's foreign affairs in the best possible manner?

11.1 Countrywide indicators

11.2 Age-wise indicators



11.3 Ethnicity-based indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
51	11	4	2	5	1	2	0	1	9	14
18	45	6	0	1	3	1	0	0	25	2
29	15	1	6	0	6	0	0	6	36	1
49	20	3	0	0	2	0	0	3	19	3
48	17	0	0	9	0	4	0	0	22	0
24	22	0	2	0	0	0	14	0	19	19
10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	30
25	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0

Sindhi ● Punjabi ● Pakhtun ● Seraiki-speaking ● Urdu-speaking ● Baloch ● Hindko-speaking ● Others

the worst possible manner, respondents are mostly likely to nominate the PPP for this ignominious distinction at 38 per cent, with the PMLN coming in second worst place with 17.6 per cent, and the MQM ranking third with 11.8 per cent. Older respondents are more sceptical of both the PPP and PMLN at 46.5 and 27.9 per cent while being less wary of the MQM at 7 per cent. Ethnic differences are numerous across the parties and the ethnic groups.

Finally, respondents were asked whether or not they would vote for a party based upon its professed preferred relations with the US, Afghanistan, India, and Muslim countries. With respect to the US, a plurality of respondents at 38.5 per cent would vote for a party that maintains a "neutral stance" compared to 28 per cent who would vote for one that "pledges strong ties with the United States" and 17.2 per cent who prefer a party that opposes such ties. The balance does not consider this a factor. This is somewhat curious: given the anti-Americanism that is pervasive in Pakistan, relatively few would support a party based upon its professed commitment to opposing ties with the US.

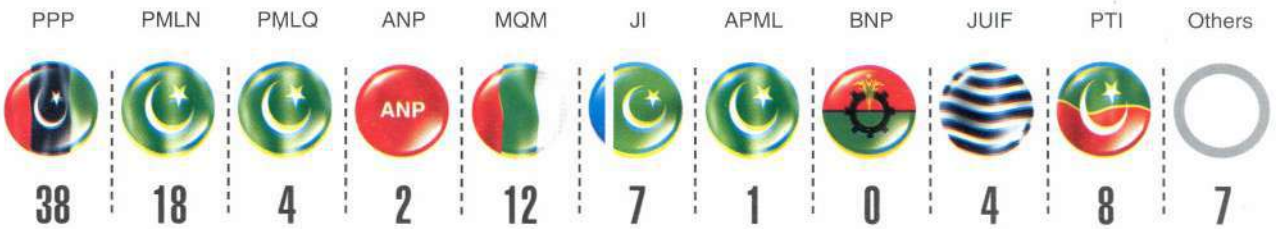
With respect to Afghanistan, 37.9 per cent of respondents would support a party that "pledges strong ties" and another 37.8 per cent would support a party that "maintains" neutrality. Only 9.3 per cent would vote for a party that opposes such ties with Pakistan's western neighbour. The balance rejects this as a consideration in voting choices.

With regards to a party's position on ties with India, a plurality prefers a party that maintains a

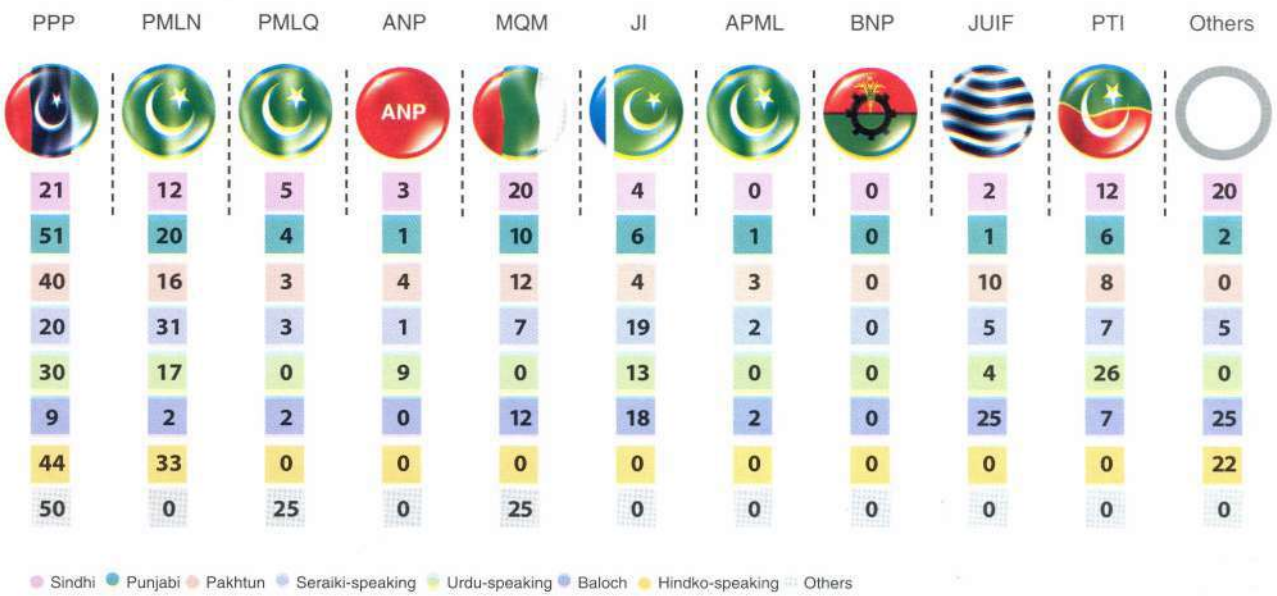
Despite the notion that China is Pakistan's all-weather friend, it does not fare terribly better than other countries in the survey

12 | Which party will handle Pakistan's foreign affairs in the worst possible manner?

12.1 **Countrywide** indicators



12.2 **Ethnicity-based** indicators



13 | Would you vote for a party that...

13.1 **Countrywide** indicators

neutral stance at 37.8 per cent as compared to 28.1 per cent of the respondents who prefer a party to pledge peaceful ties with India and 17 per cent who prefer a party to reject such ties. Thus, while many Pakistanis are wary of their eastern neighbour, there does not seem to be a strong impetus to prefer a party that is hostile to ties with India, as was the case with Pak-US ties.

In contrast to relations with India, Afghanistan and the US, an overwhelming majority of the respondents at 73.6 per cent say that they would support a party that would pledge peaceful ties with "Muslim countries". Neutrality garners a mere 13.7 per cent of the responses. ■

Security

By Muhammad Amir Rana

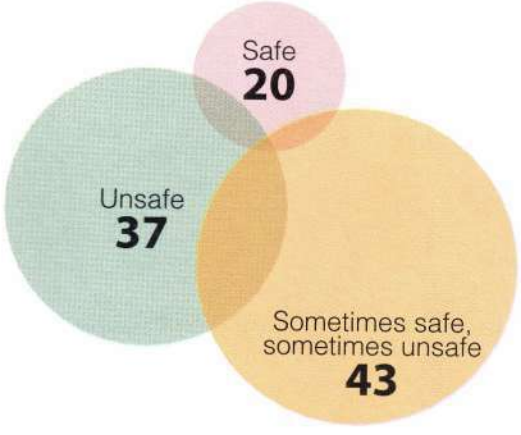
Home-grown threat

In present times, Pakistanis perceive their lives increasingly at risk. This pervading sense of insecurity is revealed through findings in a Herald survey, indicating that people feel less secure in the cities that they live in and more concerned about security during religious processions and political rallies. An overwhelming majority perceives extremism in Pakistan as a problem and it remains to be seen how political parties will respond to this issue during their electoral campaigns.

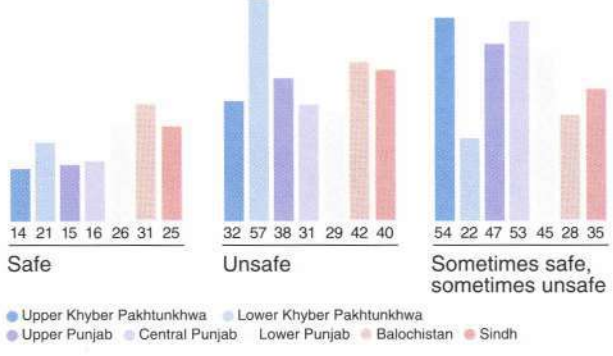
White Star

1 | Religious processions are...

1.1 Countrywide indicators



1.2 Region-based indicators

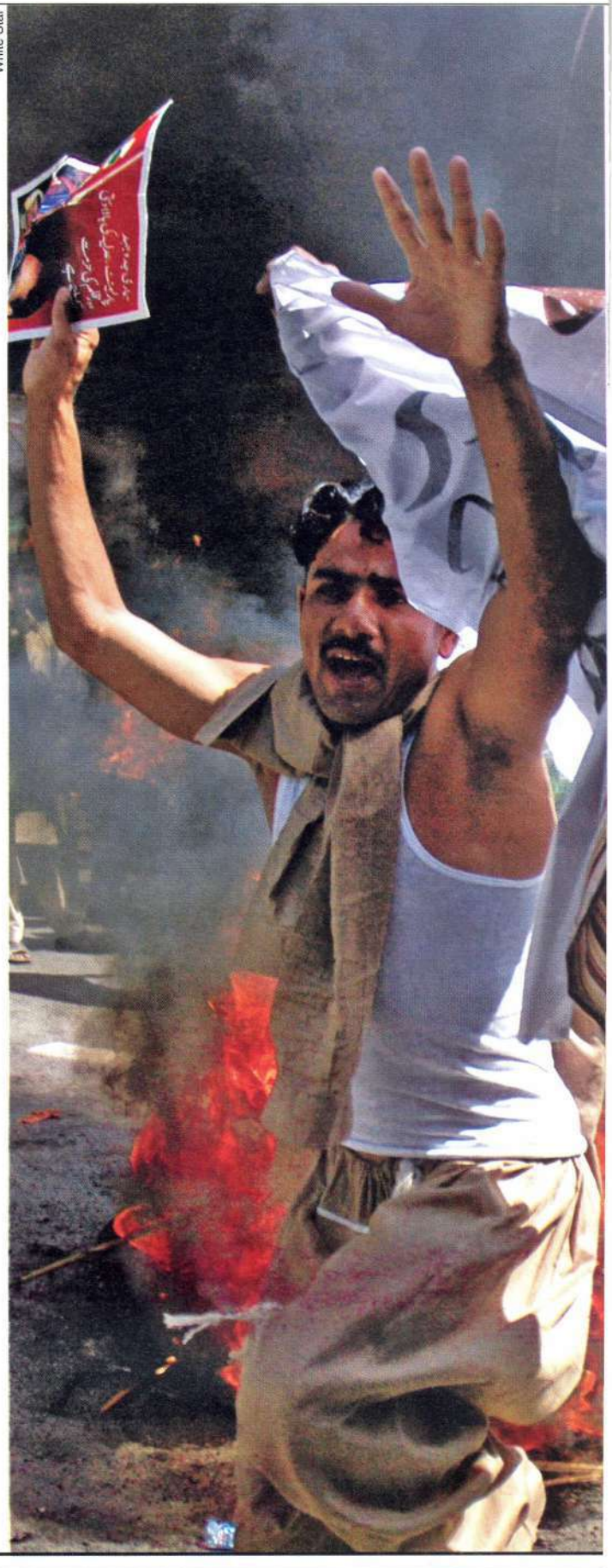


Only about a quarter of respondents ranked themselves as feeling highly secure in the cities where they reside, and even less (19.1 per cent) in the related provinces. The remaining respondents graded their sense of security at the four lower levels on a scale of one to five, with around 30 per cent of all respondents ranking it at the two lowest levels.

Nearly 37 per cent of respondents say they consider religious processions unsafe and about 43 per cent hold mixed views stating that religious processions are at times safe and at other times unsafe. In lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Sindh, a higher percentage of respondents consider religious processions to be unequivocally unsafe – 57, 42 and 40 per cent respectively – than those who consider them unequivocally safe. The findings indicate that the level of perceived insecurity regarding religious processions is

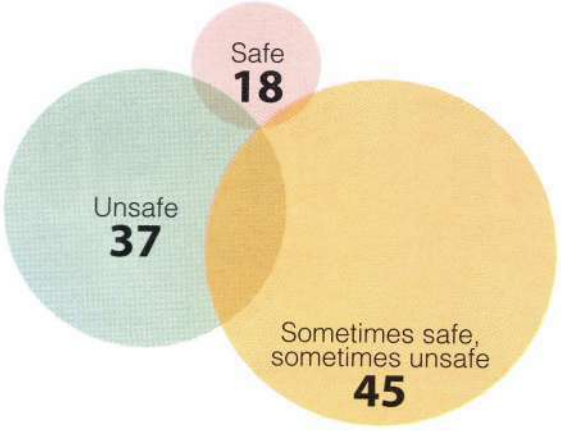
Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

White Star

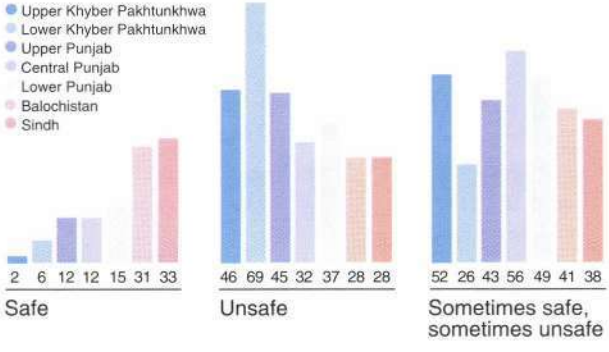


2 | Political rallies are...

2.1 Countrywide indicators



2.2 Region-based indicators



only slightly more in urban areas with 39 per cent of urban dwellers considering religious processions to be unequivocally unsafe as compared with 41 per cent of rural dwellers, and 45 per cent of the former considering religious processions to be sometimes safe and at other times not safe as compared with 43 per cent of the latter.

Significantly, 37.2 per cent of the respondents express the firm view that political rallies are unsafe, 45.3 per cent have mixed views on the issue, and 17.5 per cent regard them as unequivocally safe. A strong sense of insecurity in this regard is once again the highest in lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 69 per cent, with upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following at 46 per cent.

An overwhelming majority of respondents at 72 per cent consider extremism a problem with only eight per cent stating that it has no consequences; while 20 per cent believe that extremism is sometimes a problem and at other times has no consequences. Interestingly, a lower percentage of female respondents at 67 percent consider extremism to be a problem, as compared to male respondents at 72 per cent.

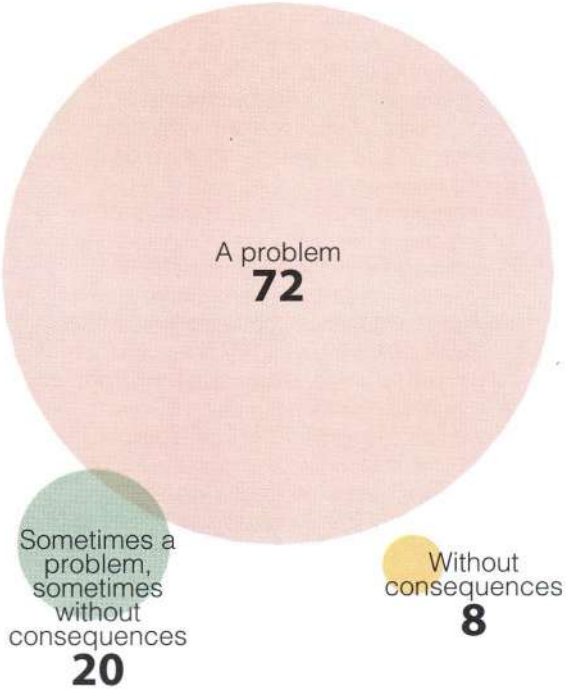
The sense that extremism is a problem is greatest in lower Punjab, Balochistan and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 89 per cent, 81 per cent and 80 per cent, with Sindh reflecting this sense to the least degree at 57 per cent. This perception also appears to be directly proportional to income level as it is highest in the highest income group at 85 per

White Star

A majority of survey respondents blame the Taliban for promoting violence in Pakistan

3 | Extremism in Pakistan is...

3.1 **Countrywide** indicators

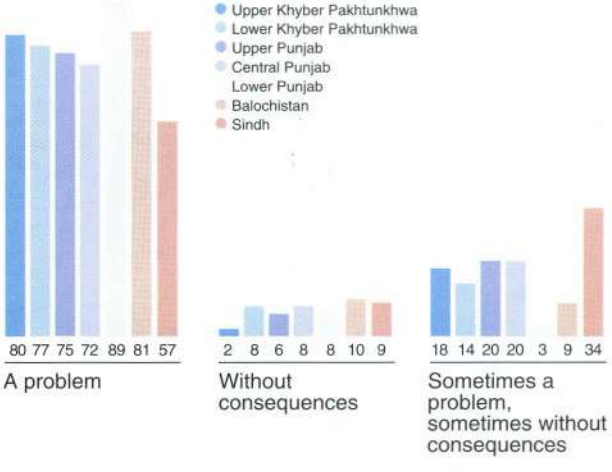


3.2 **Urban/rural** indicators

3.3 **Gender-based** indicators

The sense that extremism is a problem is greatest in lower Punjab, Balochistan and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 89 per cent, 81 per cent and 80 per cent, with Sindh reflecting this sense to the least degree at 57 per cent.

3.4 **Region-based** indicators



cent and lowest in the lowest income group at 68 per cent. The same holds true for the educational level where the perception of extremism as a problem is highest among those with a Master's degree or above at 79 per cent and least among those with no education at 57 per cent. Less than 10 per cent of respondents at each level of education consider extremism as being without consequences.

It is interesting to note in the light of the above that only 23.5 per cent of the respondents favour a policy of unmitigated military action against the Taliban, with the overwhelming majority expressing the view that the government should either negotiate with them or follow a two-pronged strategy of negotiation and military action.

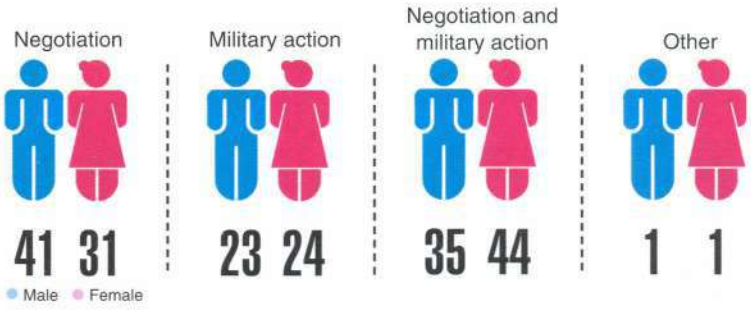
Interestingly, far more people in Balochistan favour the path of negotiation alone at 65 per cent than in any

4 | The government's engagement with the Taliban should focus on...

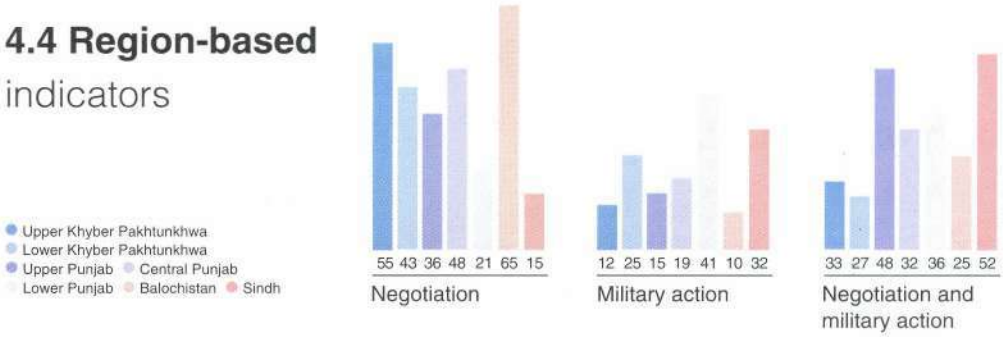
4.1 Countrywide indicators

4.2 Urban/rural indicators

4.3 Gender-based indicators



4.4 Region-based indicators



other province and by far the lowest support for military action against the Taliban is also found in this province. By far the highest degree of support for military action is found in lower Punjab at 41 per cent and responses from Sindh reflect the highest support for a mixed policy of negotiation and military action at 52 per cent.

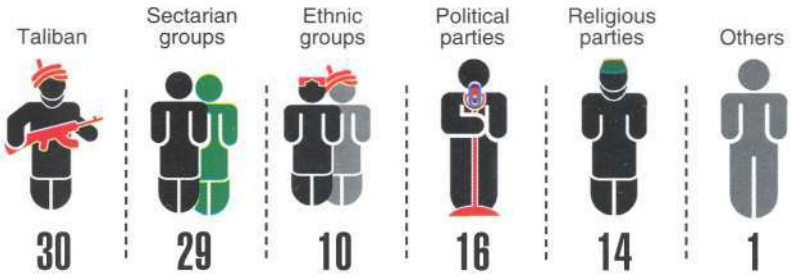
When asked to identify groups that promote violence in the country, a majority of respondents at 29.6 per cent identify the Taliban, followed closely by ethnic groups at 28.7 per cent, with the remaining vote being spread across ethnic groups, political parties and religious parties. There is wide agreement among the respondents (92.8 per cent) that government policy towards all such groups includes banning them, rather than supporting them or remaining neutral.

A majority of respondents at 25.9 per cent consider the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PMLN) as the party that can best counter religious violence, followed closely by the PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party) at 24.2 percent. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) follows third at 20.5 per cent and responses for all the other parties remain restricted to single digits. Responses to the question of which party can best counter ethnic violence reflect almost exactly the same trend except that the PPP now outstrips the PMLN by less than a percentage point.

Nearly half the respondents at 48.5 per cent view the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) as a party that promotes ethnic violence. This is followed by the PPP at 15.5 per cent. Interestingly, in the regional breakdown of the survey regarding this question, 64 per cent of

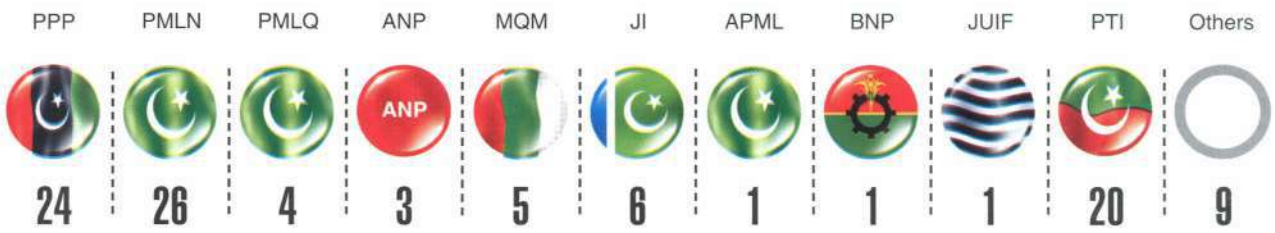
5 | Which groups promote violence in the country?

5.1 Countrywide indicators



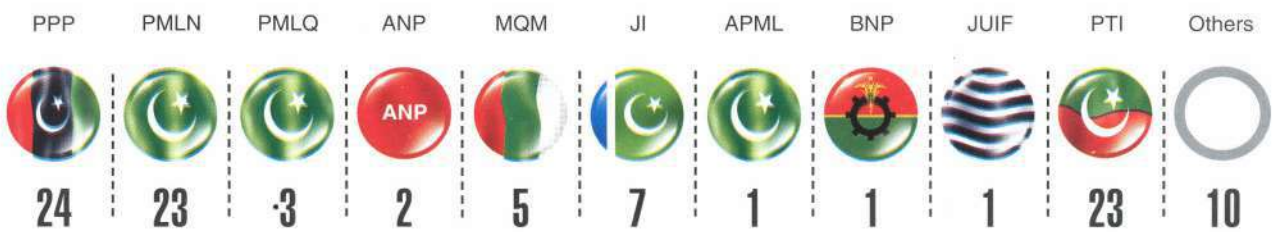
6 | Which party can best counter religious violence?

6.1 Countrywide indicators



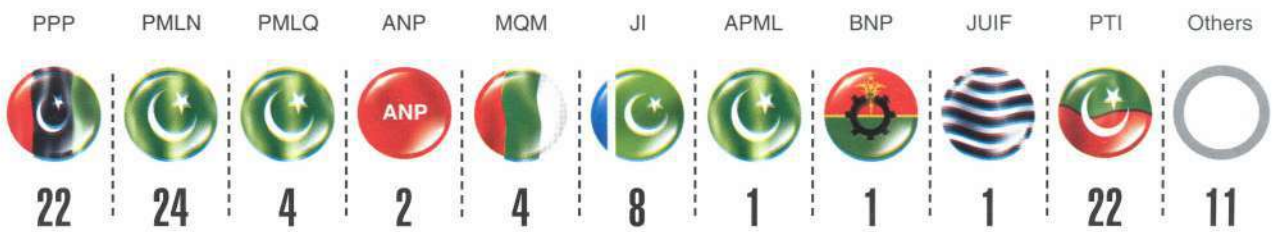
7 | Which party can best counter ethnic violence?

7.1 Countrywide indicators



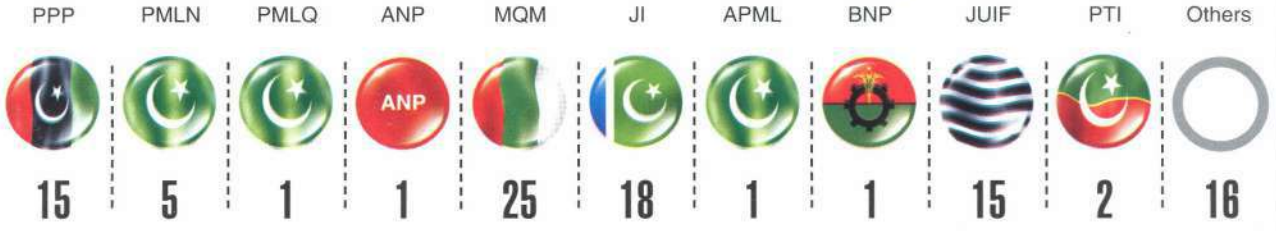
8 | Which party can best counter sectarian violence?

8.1 Countrywide indicators



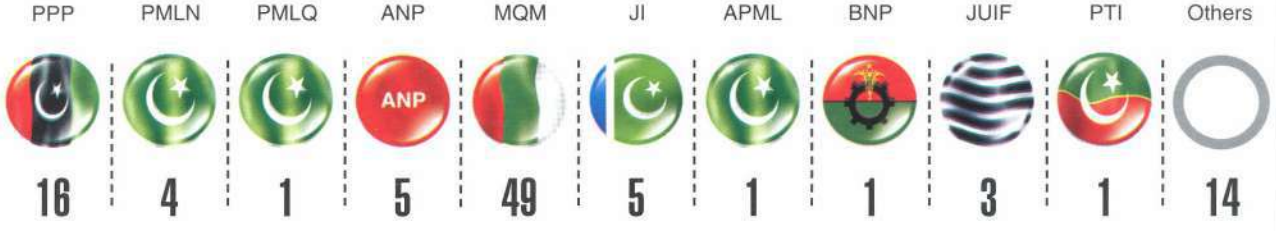
9 | Which party promotes religious violence?

9.1 Countrywide indicators



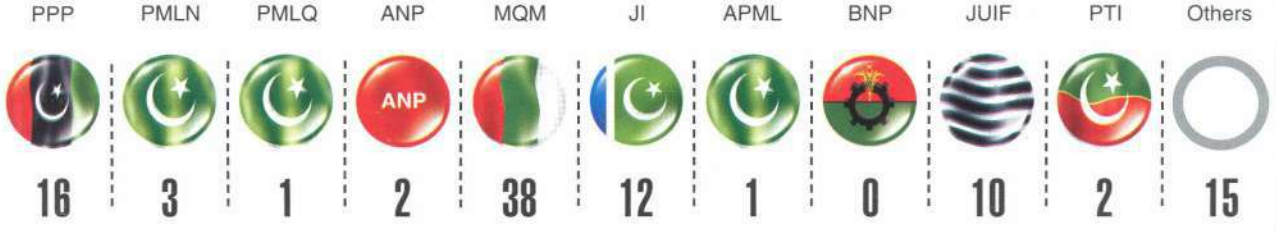
10 | Which party promotes ethnic violence?

10.1 Countrywide indicators



11 | Which party promotes sectarian violence?

11.1 Countrywide indicators



respondents from upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 61 per cent from lower Punjab allege that the MQM are the proponents of ethnic violence. When asked which political parties are behind sectarian violence, 37.2 per cent of the respondents name MQM the culprit whereas about 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 10 per cent of the respondents point to PPP, JI and JUIF, respectively.

There has been increasing realisation in recent years of the need to curb and reverse the trend of extremism in Pakistan. However, as the perceptions expressed by survey respondents reflect, little progress has been made in this regard. On the contrary, the rise in militancy and violence in the country points to the further deterioration of security and law and order, as well as the ineffective provision of protection to citizens. In this context, this survey provides insights into the mindset of the general public about national issues pertaining to violence and security.

The perception among survey respondents that mainstream parties are responsible for sectarian violence may not reflect ground realities, but as they also appear to believe that these parties can offer a solution, the feeling that their response to the problem has so far been weak may have contributed to this perception in the first place.

Overall, the findings of this survey indicate a positive change in public opinion which is becoming more responsive when it comes to issues of security and extremism. ■

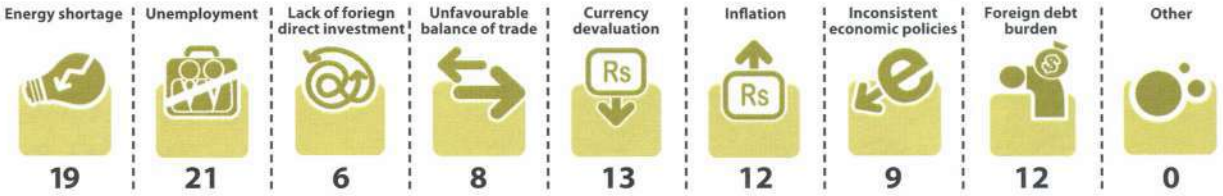
Money means, and content

By Sakib Sherani

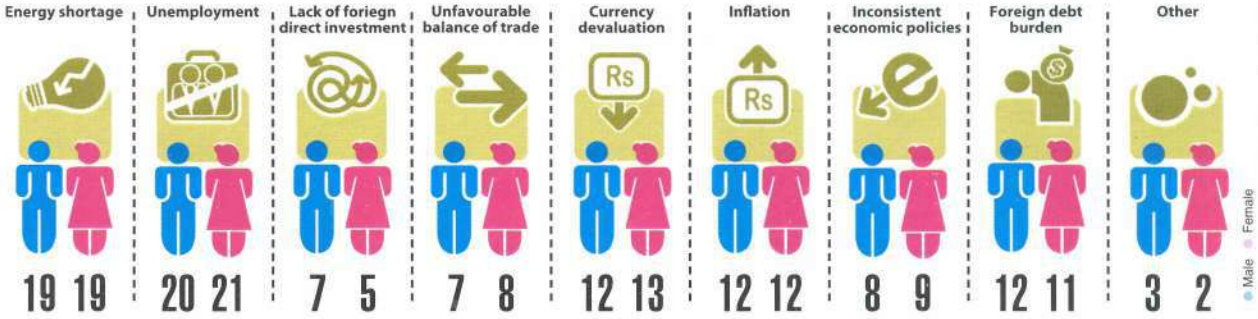
What influence the state of the economy exerts on any general election has been a matter of much debate throughout Pakistan's brief and turbulent electoral experience. Generally, before each of the country's democratic or quasi-democratic elections since 1977, the economy has not been performing too well — barring 1988 (and in 2008, as supporters of the Pervez Musharraf regime might argue). Hence, it would be tempting and easy to read most of the election results through the 1990s as having been affected at least partially by the economic condition – real or perceived – of the electorate. The pre-election survey conducted by Herald has some surprising, and perhaps counter-intuitive, findings about the thought process of eligible voters.

1 | What are the biggest economic issues facing Pakistan today?

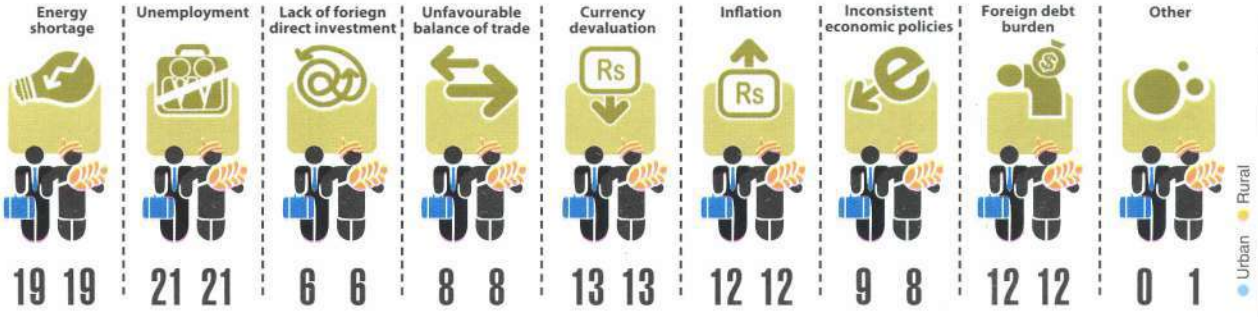
1.1 Countrywide indicators



1.2 Gender-based indicators



1.3 Urban/rural indicators



Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

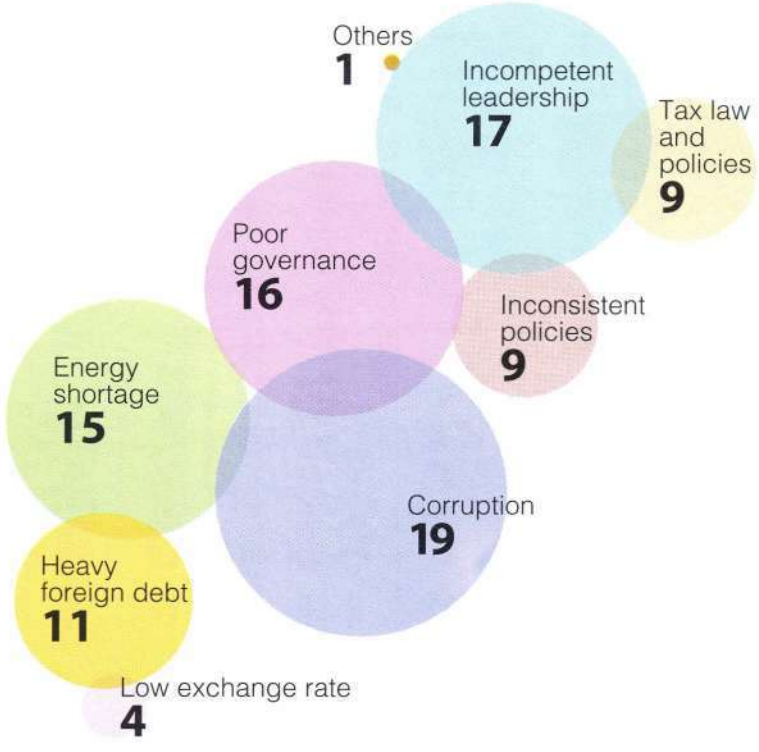
Twin troubles: Shortage of energy and jobs

On being asked to respond to the question, "What do you think are the biggest economic issues facing Pakistan today?" energy shortage is a surprising second, with 19 per cent of the respondents listing it as the number one problem after unemployment. Unemployment is listed as the most pressing problem for 21 per cent of the respondents. The other contenders for Pakistan's most pressing economic issues, in ranked order, are listed by the respondents as: devaluation of the rupee, inflation, foreign debt burden (12 per cent), inconsistent economic policies (8.7 per cent), an unfavourable trade balance (7.7 per cent), lack of foreign direct investment (5.8 per cent). The ranking by respondents reflects similarly along urban and rural lines, and along gender divisions.

It may be surprising but reassuring news to the incumbent Pakistan Peoples Party government to see that energy shortages and inflation have been relegated to second and fourth spot in the ranking of Pakistan's most pressing issues by likely voters, with less than a fifth of the respondents rating the energy crisis as the biggest problem in this troubled economy.

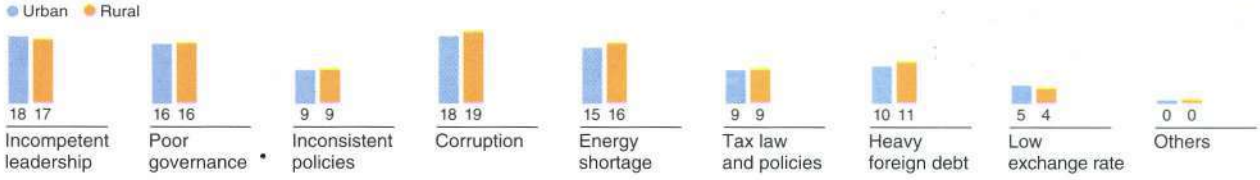
2 | What are the biggest hurdles facing Pakistan in improving its economy?

2.1 **Countrywide** indicators



It may be surprising but reassuring news to the incumbent Pakistan Peoples Party government to see that energy shortages and inflation have been relegated to second and fourth spot in the ranking of Pakistan's most pressing issues by likely voters, with only a fifth of the respondents rating the energy issue as the biggest issue in this troubled economy.

2.2 **Urban/rural** indicators



A regional split of the responses reveals (or confirms, in some cases) the fault lines of economic discontent. To little surprise, respondents from Balochistan feel they are hardest hit by unemployment, energy shortages, as well as by inflation. Along with Balochistan, (23 per cent) unemployment is also the biggest issue in Sindh (24 per cent). The accepted narrative about southern Punjab's economic deprivation somehow doesn't come through in the responses to the survey questions. Amongst all the regions surveyed, lower Punjab ranks as the least affected (on a relative basis) in terms of unemployment (18 per cent), energy shortage (16 per cent) and inflation (17 per cent).

The other distinguishing regional feature concerns Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Barring unemployment, where respondents from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are close to the national average in ranking it as the biggest issue, responses from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are more evenly distributed across the other options, instead of being concentrated in a few areas.

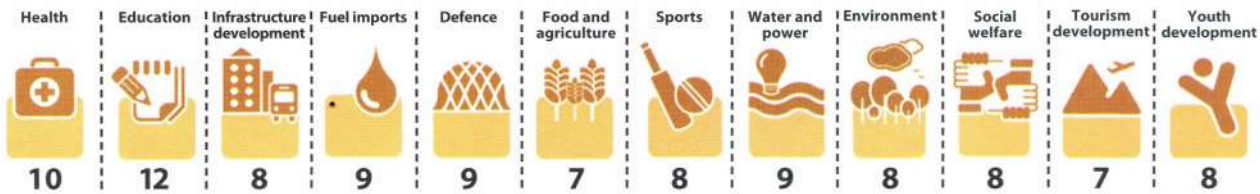
Prioritising concerns

The question "What are the biggest hurdles facing Pakistan in improving its economy?" produces unsurprising responses. Corruption is ranked number one, by 18.6 per cent of the respondents, followed by

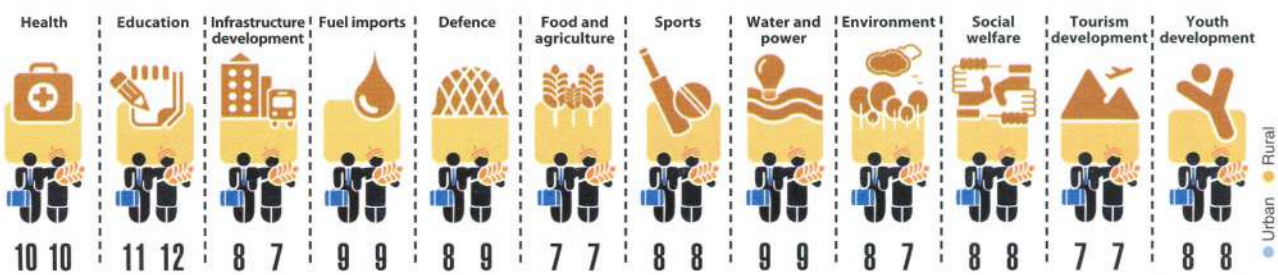
Twelve per cent of the respondents believe that inflation is the biggest economic issue Pakistan faces today

3 | Which sectors should Pakistan increase its expenditure in?

3.1 Countrywide indicators



3.2 Urban/rural indicators

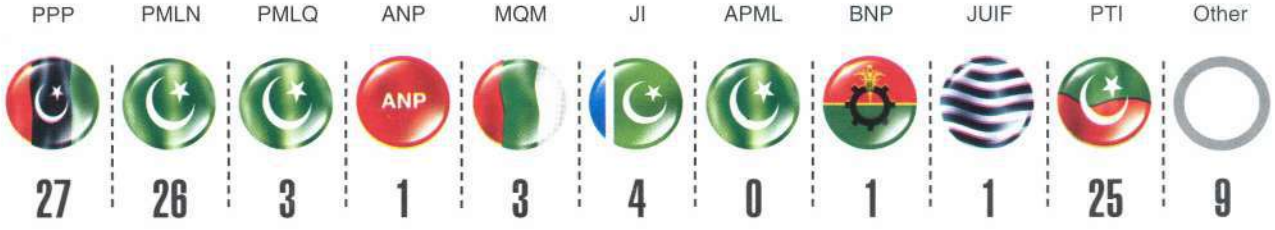


4 | Which sectors should Pakistan reduce its expenditure in?

4.1 Countrywide indicators

5 | Which party will be the most effective in addressing Pakistan's economic problems?

5.1 Countrywide indicators



Ten per cent of survey respondents believe that Pakistan should increase its health expenditure, while eight per cent believe that expenditure devoted to health should be reduced

incompetent leadership (17.3 per cent) and poor governance (16 per cent). Energy shortage is fourth on the priority list (15.2 per cent), and heavy foreign debt is fifth (10.6 per cent), followed by tax laws and policies and inconsistent policies.

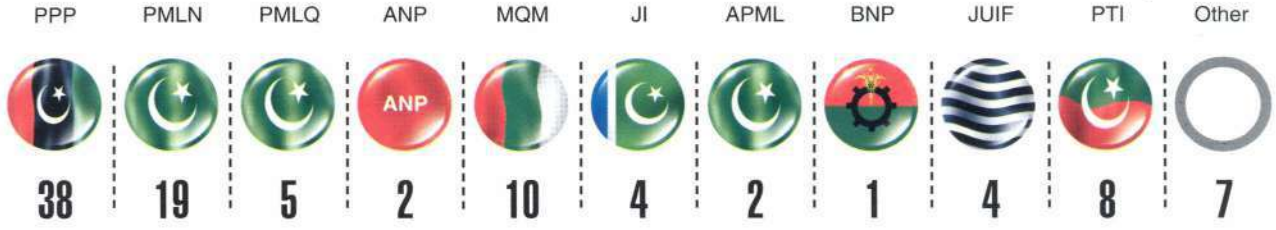
Responding to the question on which sectors Pakistan should increase expenditure, education and health drew the largest votes, with 10 and 12 per cent, respectively, followed by water and power (nine per cent). Nine per cent of the respondents were in favour of increasing defence expenditures. However, a slightly higher number of respondents think Pakistan should cut expenditure on defence.

Looking to leaders no more

By a wide margin, the PPP is considered the political party which would be the least effective in addressing Pakistan's economic problems, with 38 per cent of the respondents listing it the most ineffective. PMLN is a distant second, for 19 per cent of the

6 | Which party will be the least effective in addressing Pakistan's economic problems?

6.1 Countrywide indicators



President Asif Ali Zardari is the co-chairman of the incumbent PPP

respondents. The MQM claims third place, with 9.9 per cent feeling that it will be the least effective, followed by PTI at 7.9 per cent. Prima facie, as the only political party to have formally presented an economic road map, seems to have helped PTI win the confidence of eligible voters compared to the other major political parties.

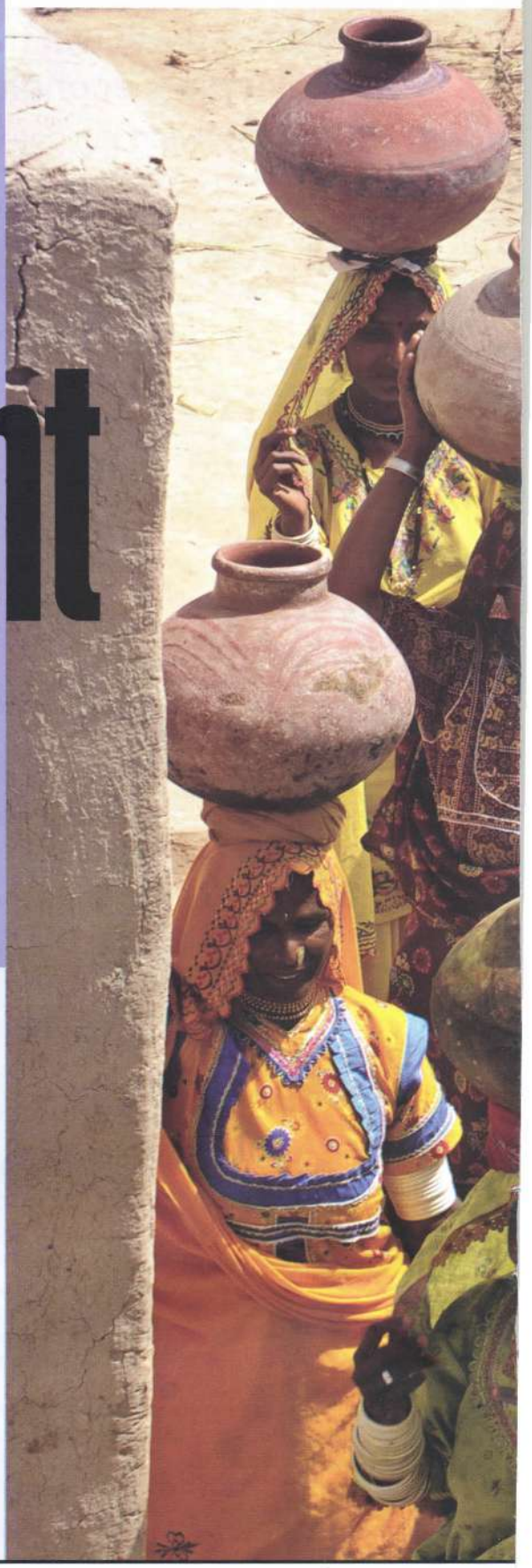
While the results of different surveys looking at different groups of respondents, cannot be compared, the results of the Political Barometer concerning economic issues appear to present a less grim picture, than conveyed by the most recent official Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey, 2010 and 2011. The PSLM reported that 43 per cent of respondents claimed their economic condition had worsened (in varying degrees) over the previous year, as compared to 33 per cent, in 2009. With much larger sample sizes, perhaps the findings of such surveys should not be easily displaced or dismissed.

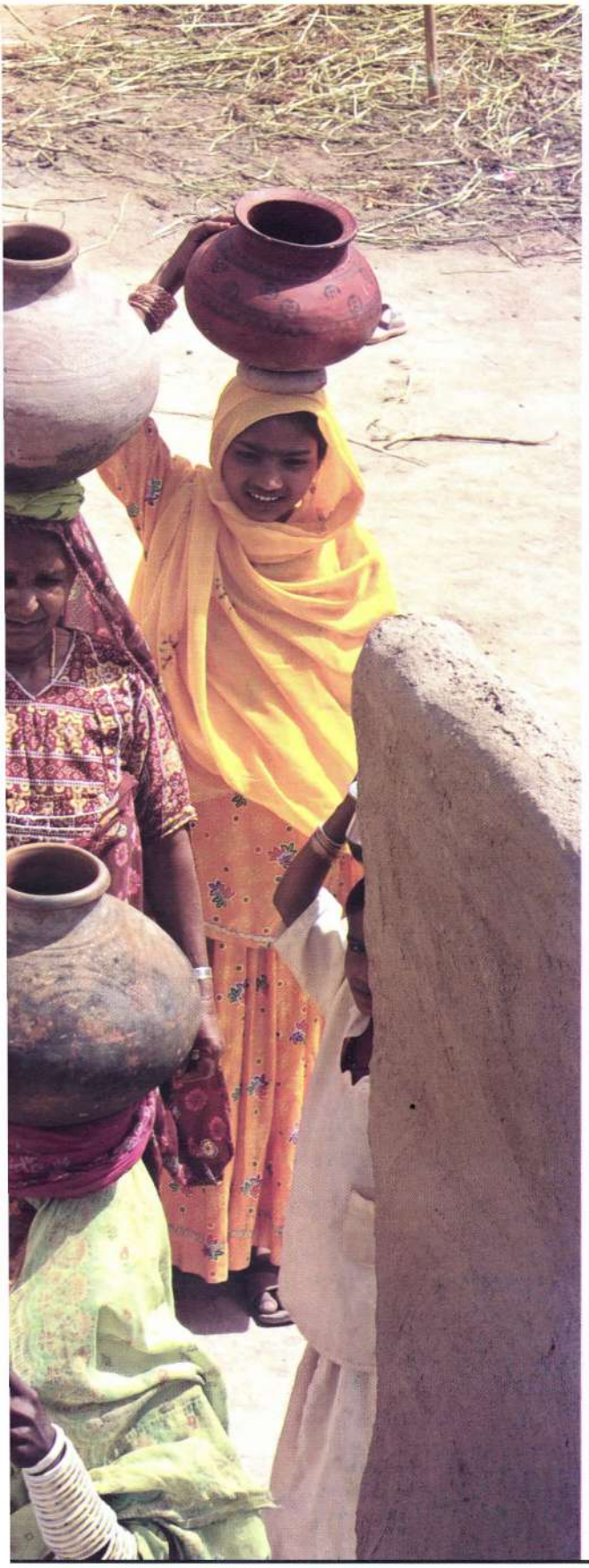
It remains to be seen whether perceived economic difficulty for the affected segments of the electorate will meaningfully translate into voting decisions in the next elections. ■

By Zafarullah Khan

United in discontent

Election 2013 will be the first election after the institution of pro-provinces federal reforms in the shape of the 18th Constitutional Amendment and its sequels, the 19th and 20th Amendments. These amendments have introduced huge structural reforms, causing power to flow towards the provinces. However, complaints about the distribution of water, power and food testify to continuing federal-provincial discontent. Creation of new provinces is also becoming part of popular political rhetoric. The Political Barometer provides interesting insights in this regard and it appears that such issues will contribute towards influencing citizens' electoral choices during the upcoming election.

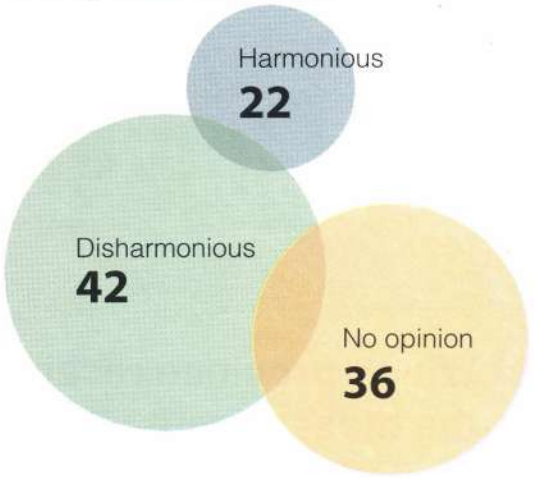




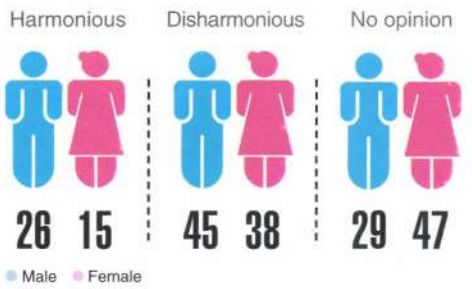
White Star

1 | Pakistan's interprovincial relations are...

1.1 **Countrywide** indicators



1.2 **Gender-based** indicators

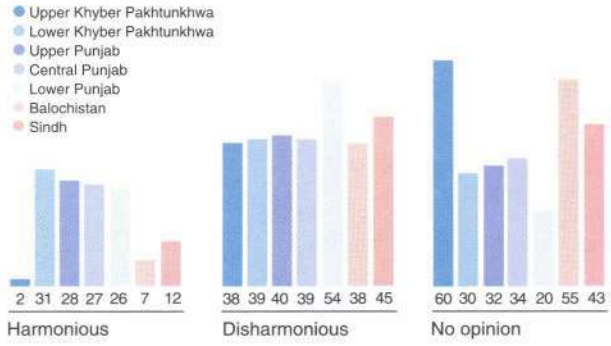


Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

Two years after the first-ever home-grown structural reforms, a sizeable majority of survey respondents – 41.9 per cent – still considers interprovincial relations as 'disharmonious'. Another 36.5 percent refrain from giving an opinion, while only 21.6 per cent regard relations as 'harmonious.' Interestingly, the feeling of disharmony gradually decreases with an increase in respondent age: 43 per cent in the age group 18-35 years view interprovincial relations as disharmonious; this declines to 38 per cent in the age group 70 years and above. The incidence of giving no opinion on the issue is highest among women at 47 per cent, as compared to 29 per cent of males who opt to withhold an opinion.

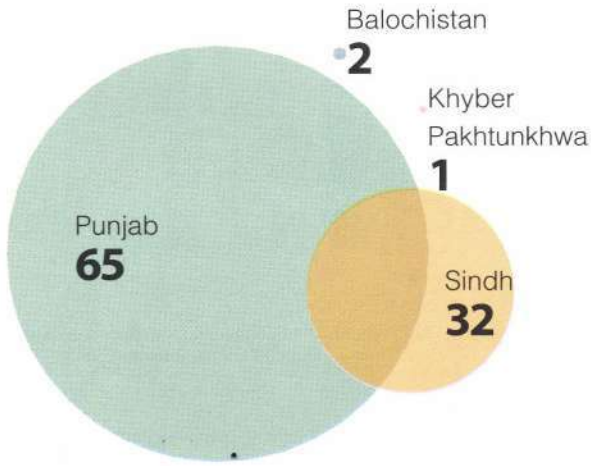
The feeling that interprovincial relations are not harmonious is highest in lower Punjab at 54 per cent, followed by Sindh at 45 per cent. While the majority of people from lower income groups (at 52 per cent) are reluctant to give an opinion on the matter, a willingness to

1.3 Region-based indicators

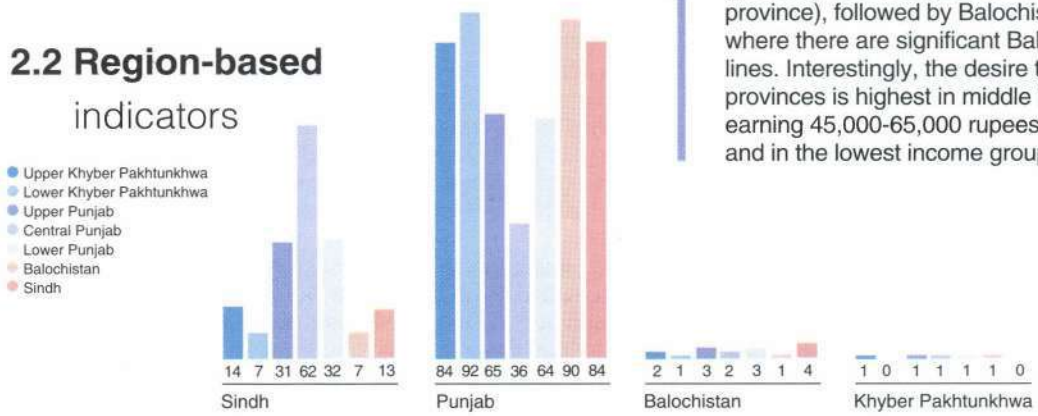


2 | Which province receives the most benefits from the central government?

2.1 Countrywide indicators



2.2 Region-based indicators



voice an opinion increases in higher income brackets: 75 per cent of people in the 250,000 rupees and above income group paint a dismal view of the state of provincial harmony. This opinion is shared by respondents with the highest educational attainments — 52 per cent of those who have a Master's degree or higher.

To the question of which province receives the most benefits from the federal government, the overwhelming answer is Punjab. 65.4 per cent of respondents believe so, and this opinion prevails among people from all age groups and transcends the gender divide. However, within Punjab, specifically its central part, the majority of respondents (at 62 per cent) consider Sindh to be the major beneficiary. From the other provinces, 92 per cent in lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 90 per cent in Balochistan and 84 per cent in Sindh regard Punjab as the major beneficiary. Overall responses indicate that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan are viewed as benefiting the least.

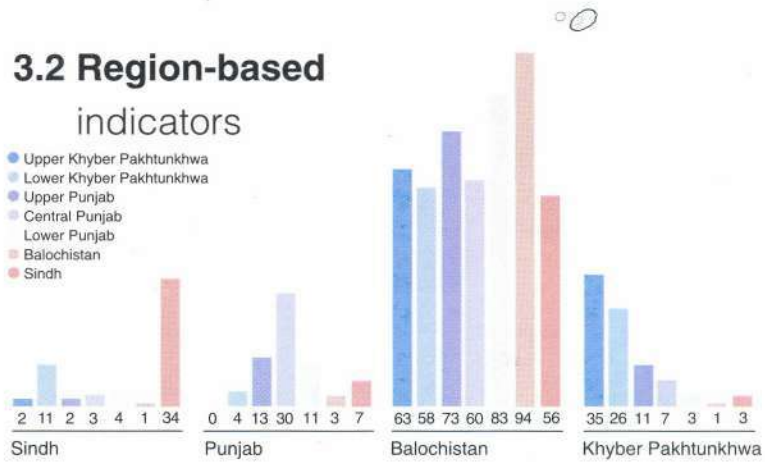
This inference is further confirmed in the response to the corresponding question of which province receives the least attention: 65.7 per cent respondents identify Balochistan, and this answer is reflected across all age groups, income and education levels, the urban/rural divide and provinces, with the feeling being strongest in Balochistan itself at 94 per cent. Responses, however, reflect a difference across the gender divide: 59 per cent of women opined that Balochistan gets the least focus on the federal radar, as compared to 70 per cent of men.

On the issue of new provinces, no firm stance can be gleaned from the data: 37.9 per cent of respondents are opposed to it and a roughly similar percentage (35.6 per cent) is in favour, while 26.5 per cent offer the more tentative response of 'Maybe'. In terms of gender, support for new provinces comes predominantly from males (at 42 per cent), while only 27 per cent of female respondents appear to be in favour. While this support is lowest in central Punjab at 29 per cent, it is highest in lower Punjab at 59 per cent (probably due to a quest for a Seraiki-speaking province), followed by Balochistan at 40 per cent, where there are significant Baloch-Pakhtun fault lines. Interestingly, the desire to create new provinces is highest in middle income groups earning 45,000-65,000 rupees, at 50 per cent, and in the lowest income group earning less than

3 | Which province receives the least attention from the central government?

3.1 **Countrywide** indicators

3.2 **Region-based** indicators



White Star

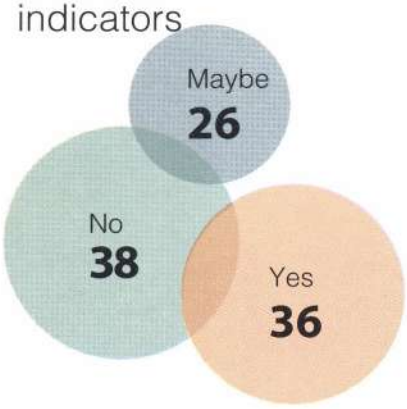
Fifty nine per cent of respondents from Balochistan say that the Balochistan National Party–Mengal will be most effective in addressing the province's problems

3,600 rupees at 49 per cent. The desire is also higher among respondents from urban areas (42 per cent), as compared with those from rural areas (30 per cent). Where educational levels are concerned, those with a Master's degree or above exhibit the greatest support for the creation of new provinces at 48 per cent, while those with a Bachelor's degree are the most opposed at 46 per cent.

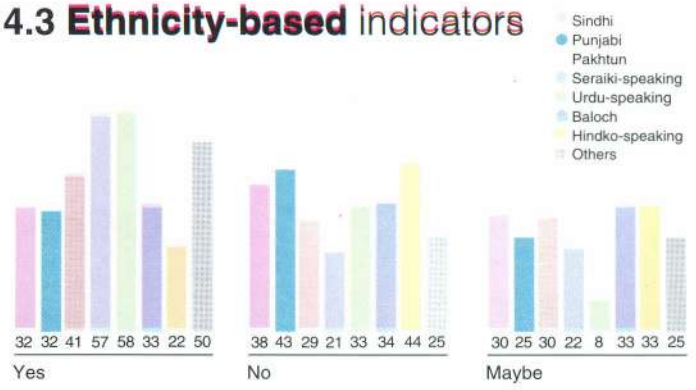
When readers were asked to rank the problems their province faces to a greater extent than do other provinces, electricity shortage emerges at the top of the list (17.7 per cent), followed by gas shortage (14.2 per cent) and water shortage (10.8 per cent). Some other problems, in order of priority, are: poor infrastructure (9.7 per cent), insecurity (8.5 per cent), violence (7.7 per cent) and poor law and order (7.6 per cent). This ranking is by and large true across gender, regions, the urban/rural divide, as well as income and education differences. Surprisingly, the question about problems that are worse in other provinces yields almost the same kind of responses, pointing towards a sense of solidarity amid misery and a feeling of commonality, at

4 | Do you support the creation of new provinces?

4.1 Countrywide indicators

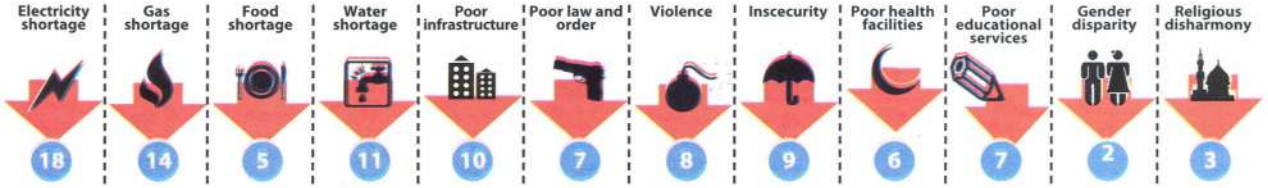


4.3 Ethnicity-based indicators

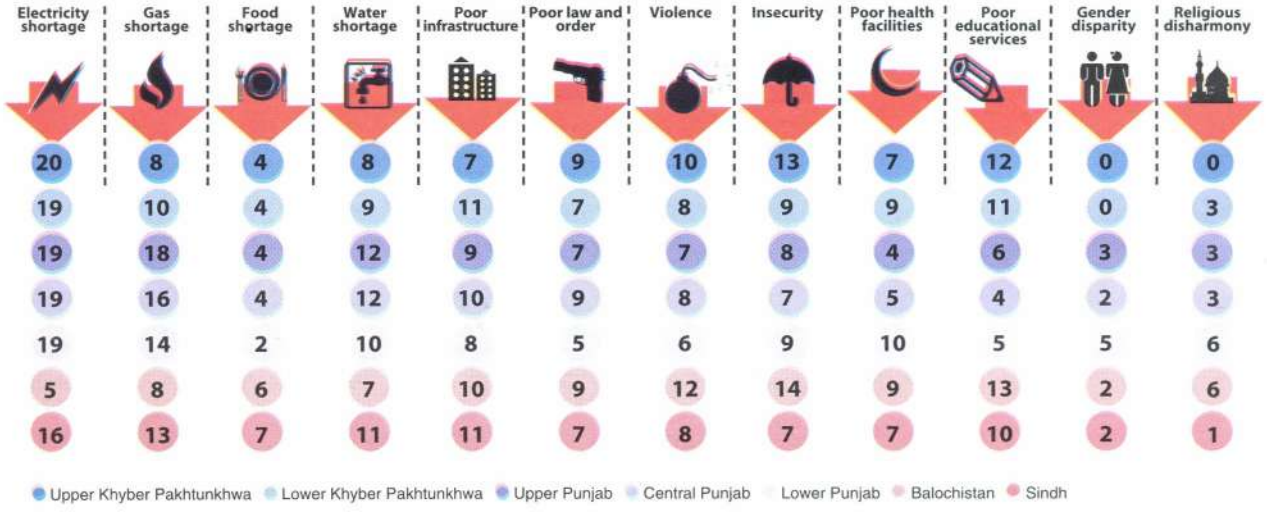


5 | Which problems does your province face more than the other provinces?

5.1 Countrywide indicators

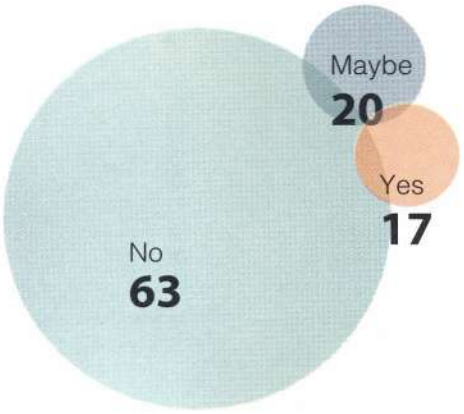


5.2 Region-based indicators

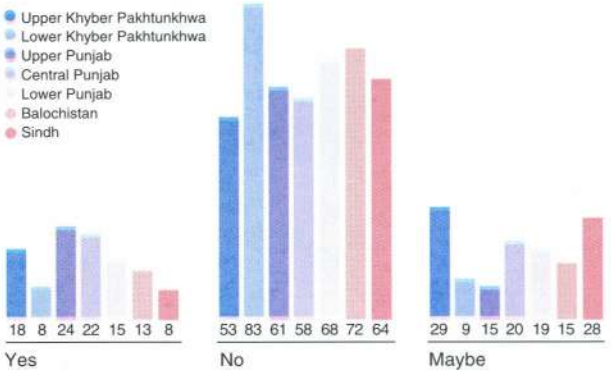


6 | Do you think water is shared equitably between all provinces?

6.1 **Countrywide** indicators

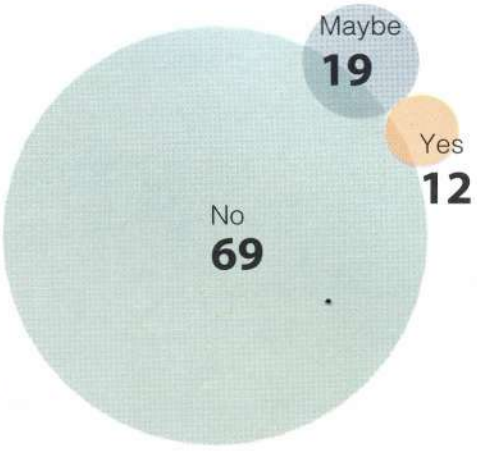


6.2 **Region-based** indicators

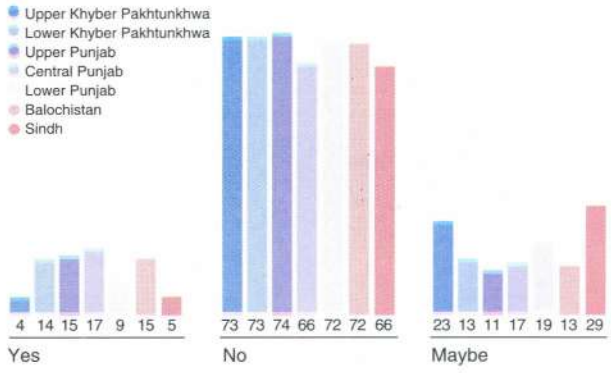


7 | Do you think power is distributed equitably between all provinces?

7.1 **Countrywide** indicators



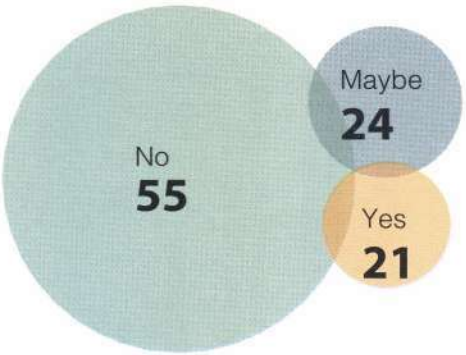
7.2 **Region-based** indicators



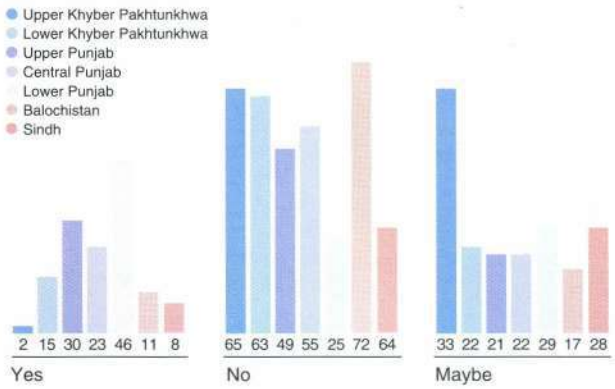
The overwhelming majority of respondents consider that water (63 per cent), power (69 per cent), and food (55.2 per cent) are not being shared equitably among the provinces, testifying to an overarching feeling of interprovincial discontent and mistrust across income and education levels. The feeling that food is not being shared equitably is the highest in Balochistan, where 72 per cent of the respondents make this complaint.

8 | Do you think food is distributed equitably between all provinces?

8.1 **Countrywide** indicators

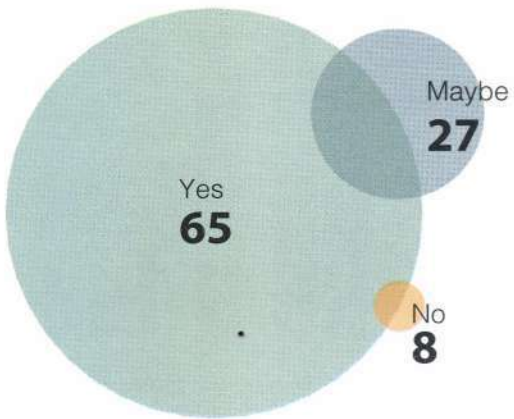


8.2 **Region-based** indicators

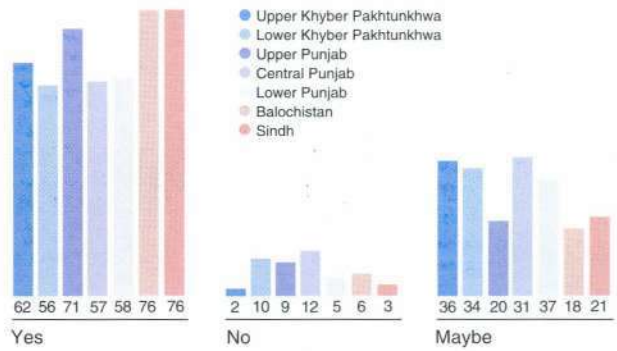


9 | Should provinces be autonomous in running their social, cultural, economic, industrial, educational and medical affairs?

9.1 **Countrywide** indicators



9.2 **Region-based** indicators

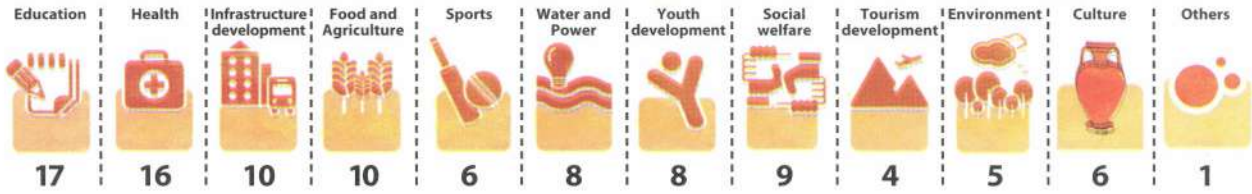


least in terms of sufferings.

The overwhelming majority of respondents appear to believe that water (63 per cent), power (69 per cent), and food (55.2 per cent) are not being shared equitably among the provinces, testifying to an overarching feeling of interprovincial discontent and mistrust across income and education levels. Regarding water, the feeling is highest in lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 83 per cent, followed by Balochistan at 72 per cent. Respondents from upper and central Punjab appear relatively more satisfied with water distribution, at 24 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. Conversely, a feeling that power (gas/electricity) is not being shared equitably is slightly higher in upper Punjab at 74 per cent than in other provinces, with the highest figures being recorded in the highest income groups. The feeling that food is not being shared equitably is the highest in Balochistan, where 72 per cent of the respondents make this complaint. This feeling, that food is not shared equitably, is seen to be at the same level across the urban/rural divide in the country at 55 per cent. Despite the fact that Pakistan is an agrarian

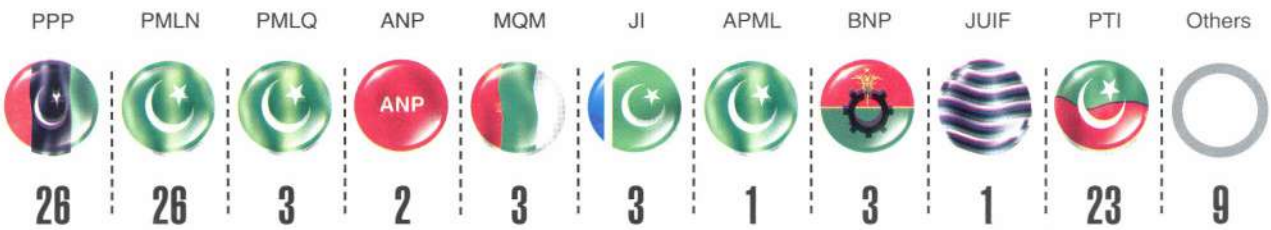
10 | Which sectors would improve if the provincial governments handled them?

10.1 **Countrywide** indicators

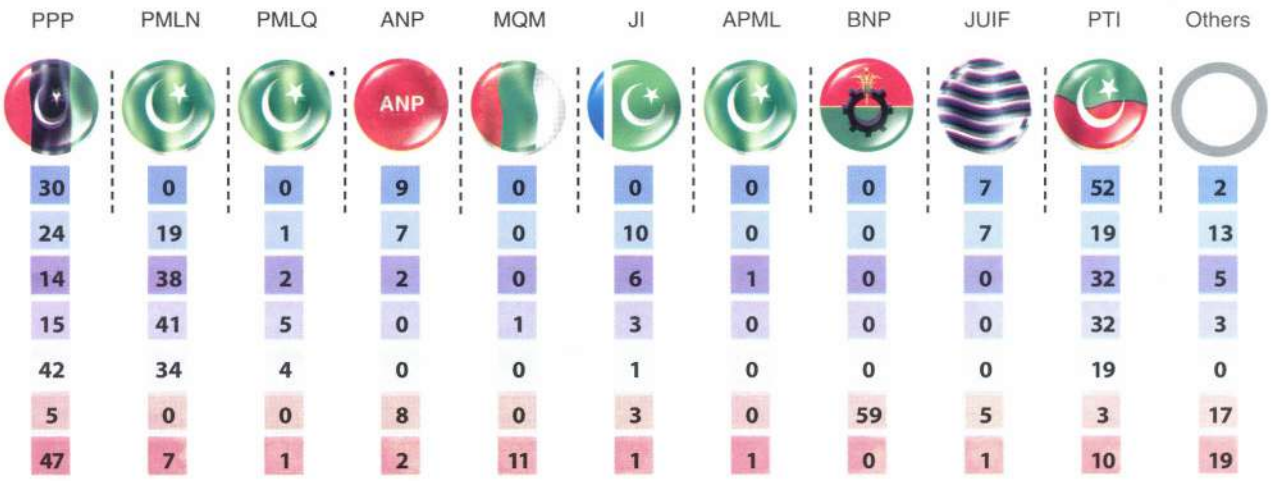


11 | Which party, were it to win, would be most effective in addressing the problems of your province?

11.1 **Countrywide** indicators



11.2 **Region-based** indicators



11.3 **Income-based** indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
32	29	3	3	5	3	0	5	5	11	4
33	31	2	3	3	1	2	1	1	13	10
29	27	4	1	3	3	0	2	1	24	6
25	27	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	27	10
24	23	3	2	2	4	1	6	0	26	9
29	35	4	0	1	4	0	3	0	18	6
22	22	1	1	6	3	0	6	2	33	4
21	13	0	10	4	4	0	2	0	38	8
11	21	5	3	13	5	0	5	0	24	13
5	24	0	14	0	5	0	5	0	38	9
23	8	8	0	23	0	0	0	0	38	0

● Below Rs 3,600 ● Rs 3,601-7,200 ● Rs 7,201-10,000 ● Rs 10,001-15,000 ● Rs 15,001-20,000 ● Rs 20,001-30,000 ● Rs 30,001-45,000
● Rs 45,001-65,000 ● Rs 65,001-100,000 ● Rs 100,001-250,000 ● Rs 250,000 and above

12 | Which party, were it to win, would be least effective in addressing the problems of your province?

12.1 **Countrywide** indicators

PPP	PMLN	PMLQ	ANP	MQM	JI	APML	BNP	JUIF	PTI	Others
41	18	5	4	10	3	1	1	3	7	7

society, the percentage of respondents who think that water is not being shared equitably is slightly higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas. The same is true for power, indicating that the phenomenon of discontent has an urban face.

A significant majority of 65.3 per cent agrees that provinces should be autonomous in running their social, cultural, economic, industrial, educational and medical affairs, and this holds true across age, income and education levels and urban and rural areas. The belief appears to be higher in Balochistan and Sindh (both at 76 per cent).

Respondents ranked education (17.2 per cent), health (15.8 per cent), infrastructure development (9.8 per cent), food and agriculture (9.6 per cent) and social welfare (8.7 per cent) as sectors that would potentially improve if handled by the provincial governments. However, there was a remarkably similar response to the correlating question of which sectors are likely to deteriorate if the provincial government handled them, making it difficult to draw any clear conclusion about attitudes. Nevertheless, this divided opinion throws a significant challenge in the way of provinces to prove their mettle in the wake of democratic devolution and the

Power riots swept through Punjab in the summer of 2012; 74 per cent of respondents from the upper part of the province believe that power is not shared equitably among all provinces

responsibility the 18th Amendment has entrusted upon them to offer better services and governance to citizens.

When respondents across the nation were asked which party would be most effective in addressing problems of your province, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz (PMLN) and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) emerged as the primary contenders at 27 per cent, 25.8 per cent and 23.4 per cent respectively. Support for the rest of the parties remained in single digit figures on the national level.

Support for the PPP remained highest in people above the age of 70 at 37 per cent, among women in Sindh at 30 per cent, in the lower Punjab region at 42 per cent as well as Sindh at 47 per cent, and among those with a monthly income of less than 7,200 rupees at 33 per cent. The party's support is higher in rural areas at 30 per cent as compared to urban areas at 21 per cent, and predominates among those with less than primary education at 44 per cent.

While the PMLN's primary support base is central and upper Punjab at 41 per cent and 38 per cent respectively, the PTI's biggest support base appears to be upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 52 per cent, followed by central and upper Punjab at 32 per cent. Interestingly, an increase in income appears to shift support from the PPP towards the PMLN and PTI. The PMLN appears to be considered the most effective in the income group of 20,000-30,000 rupees at 35 per cent, while PTI appears to be the most popular party in the highest income groups. The PPP at 30 per cent and PMLN at 28 per cent are perceived as the most effective parties in tackling provincial problems in rural areas, while the PTI at 29 per cent emerges as a favourite in urban areas, followed by the PMLN at 24 per cent and PPP at 21 per cent.

Interestingly, when asked which party would be least effective in addressing the problems of respondents' respective provinces, the ranking wasn't disturbed. Once again, the PPP emerged as the leader, with the even higher percentage of 40.5 per cent. 18.1 per cent respondents express negative views about the PMLN, as opposed to 25.8 per cent holding a favourable opinion. However, in this context, the third position goes to the Muttahida Quami Movement with 9.6 per cent of respondents expressing scepticism that the party would be effective in addressing their province's problems. For the PPP, an unfavourable opinion prevails in upper and central Punjab at 61 per cent and 57 per cent respectively, and for the PMLN, in lower Punjab at 40 per cent.

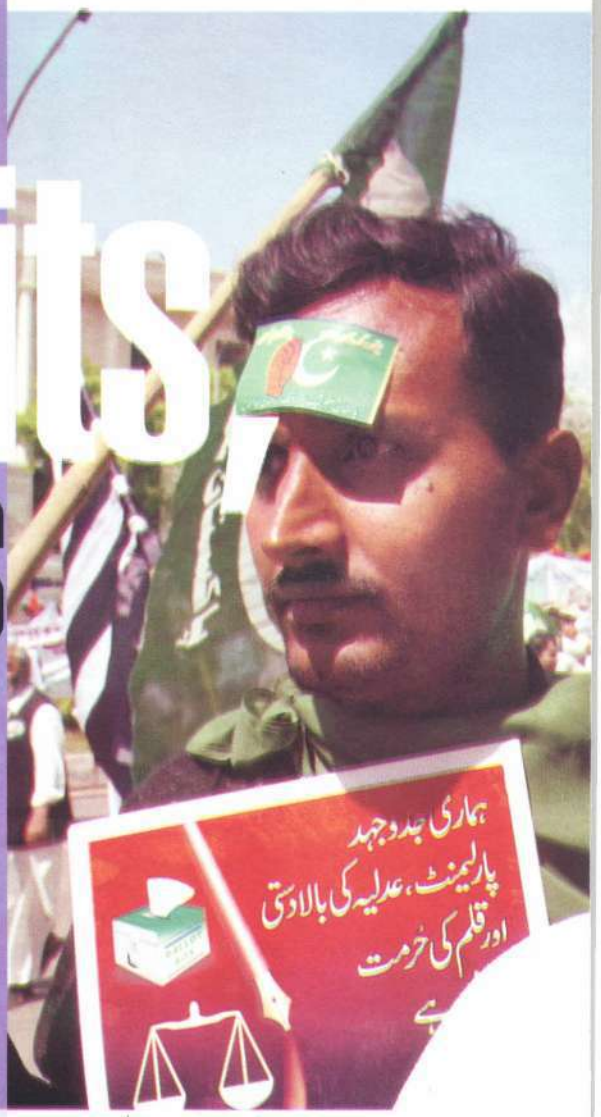
When asked if their voting preferences would depend on which party can most benefit their particular province, an overwhelming 58.8 per cent of respondents said 'Yes'; another 24.6 percent responded with 'Maybe'. This answer was largely reflected across age group, educational background, income bracket and gender with few variations. The attitude appeared most prevalent in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 74 per cent, followed by Sindh at 72 per cent.

These responses can be taken to indicate that provincial needs and concerns are emerging as a determinant for future political choices. Interestingly, even for achieving province-specific objectives, political parties with a nationwide presence and federal outlook, appear to be perceived as trustworthy agents for articulating provincial interests. It also indicates that provincial priorities and demands might be central in shaping political discourse for the 2013 election. ■

Civil-military relations

By Hasan Askari Rizvi

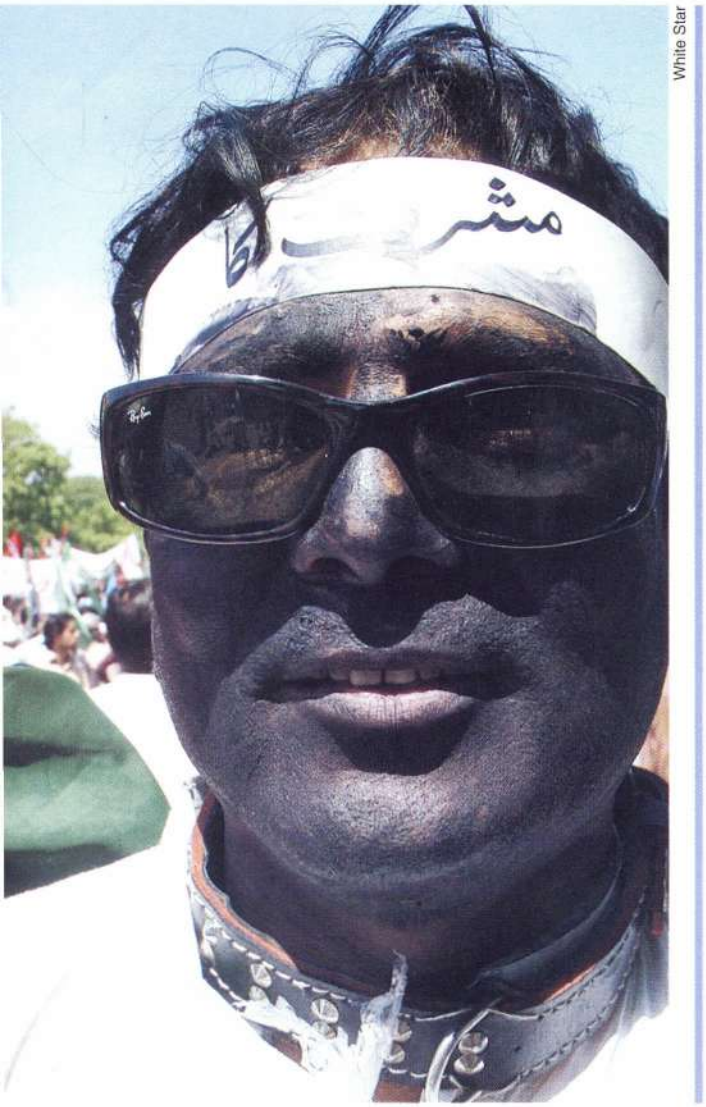
Old habits, new ways



It is impossible to undertake an analytical study of Pakistan's politics, foreign and security policies, and societal issues without taking into account the military's disposition and role. Civil-military relations are central to the dynamics of Pakistani politics. After directly ruling Pakistan four times, the military has receded to the background.and the Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani has committed support for constitutional and democratic processes. However, the military continues to be a formidable state institution that has acquired enough capacity, experience and confidence to overshadow, if not dominate, core political institutions and processes, if and when needed.

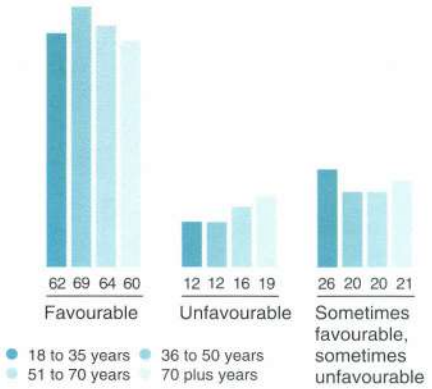
There has been considerable change in civil-military relations since the February 2008 elections. The balance of power between the civil leadership and the military – which in the past tilted decisively in favour of the latter – is now manifesting flexibility. Depending on the issues at stake and the domestic and global political context, the balance of power may not always favour the military. This gives some space to the civilian leadership to function autonomously in policymaking and enforcement.

The Herald's survey results reflect Pakistan's changed political and societal realities, which have

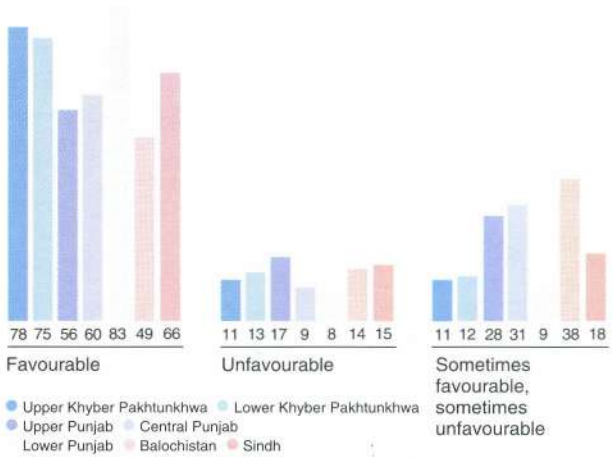


White Star

1.2 **Age-wise** indicators

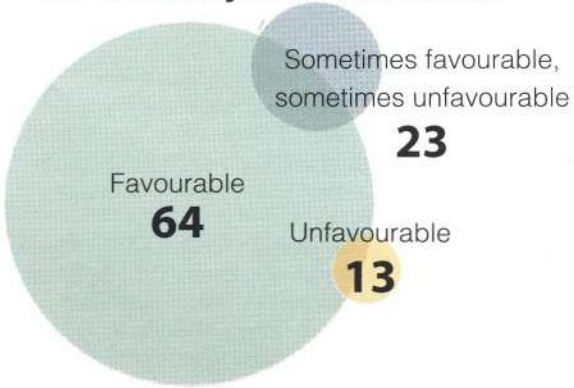


1.3 **Region-based** indicators



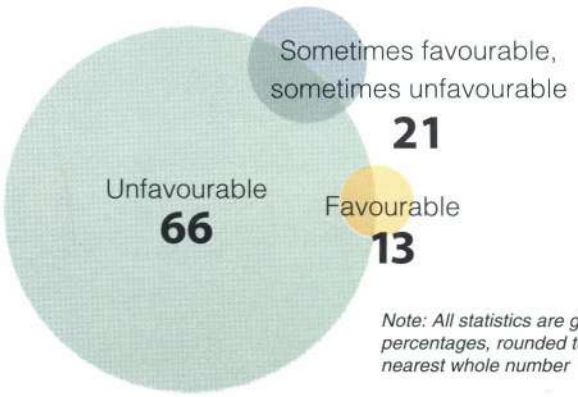
1 | Democracy for Pakistan is...

1.1 **Countrywide** indicators



2 | Martial law in Pakistan is...

2.1 **Countrywide** indicators

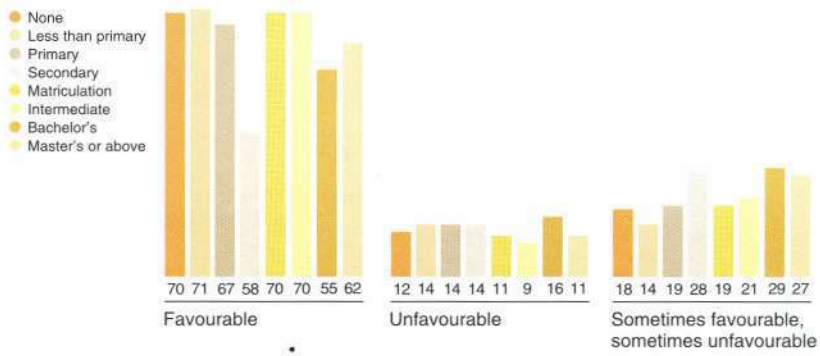


Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

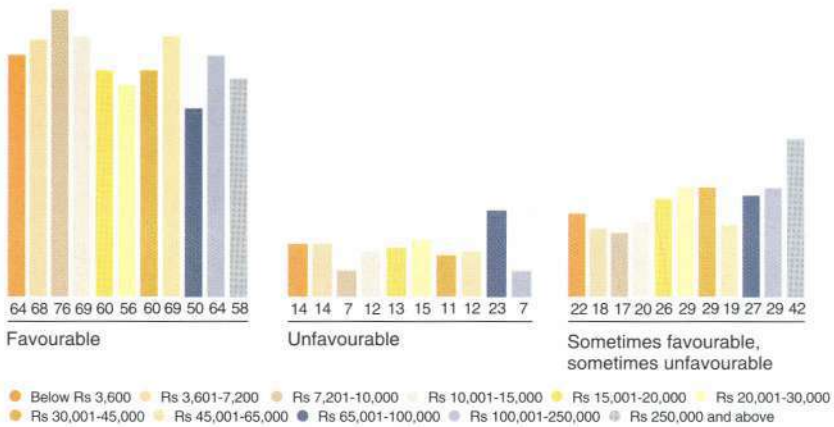
Shakil Adil/White Star

Army personnel accompany an election commission team during door-to-door voter verification in Karachi

1.4 **Education-based** indicators



1.5 **Income-based** indicators

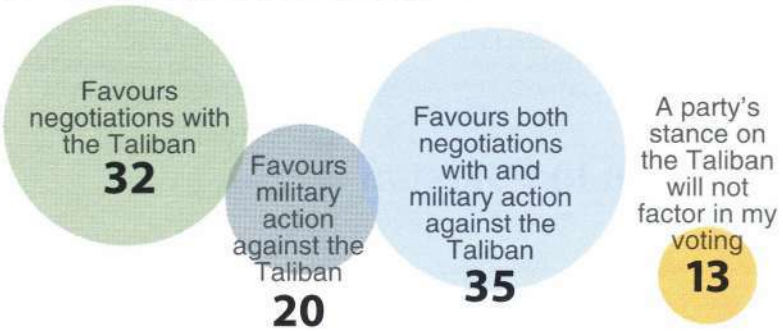


led the military to adopt subtler and more varied means to pursue its interests and concerns. There is growing support for democracy and rejection of military rule, as evidenced by respondents' views. On the question of how favourable democracy is for Pakistan, 64.4 per cent of respondents from all over the country express a favourable opinion and only 12.5 per cent express the view that democracy is not favourable for the country. On the related question seeking their approval or disapproval of martial law as a means to rule the country, responses mirror a corresponding attitude — 65.7 per cent of respondents reject martial law and only 12.9 per cent favour it. Growing support for the democratic process and the rejection of direct military rule in the form of martial law strengthens the role of civilian political institutions, processes and leaders.

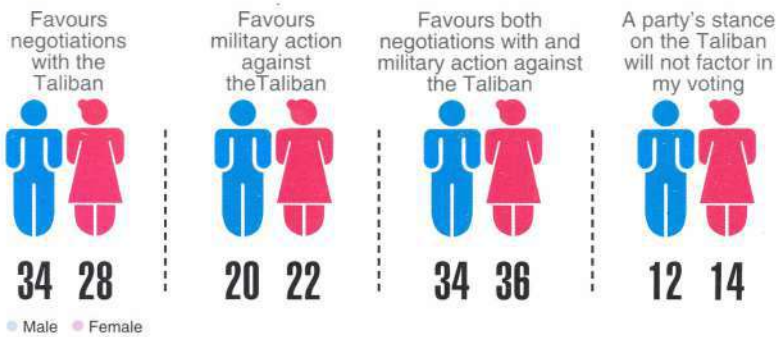
However, on the question of how much power different groups or institutions may wield over Pakistani politics and their ability to sway electoral votes, responses reveal a

3 | You will vote for a party that...

3.1 **Countrywide** indicators

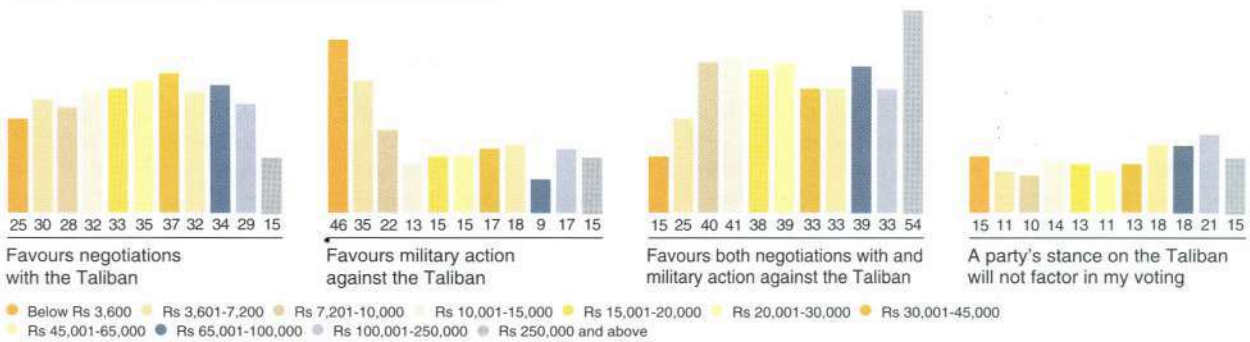


3.2 **Gender-based** indicators

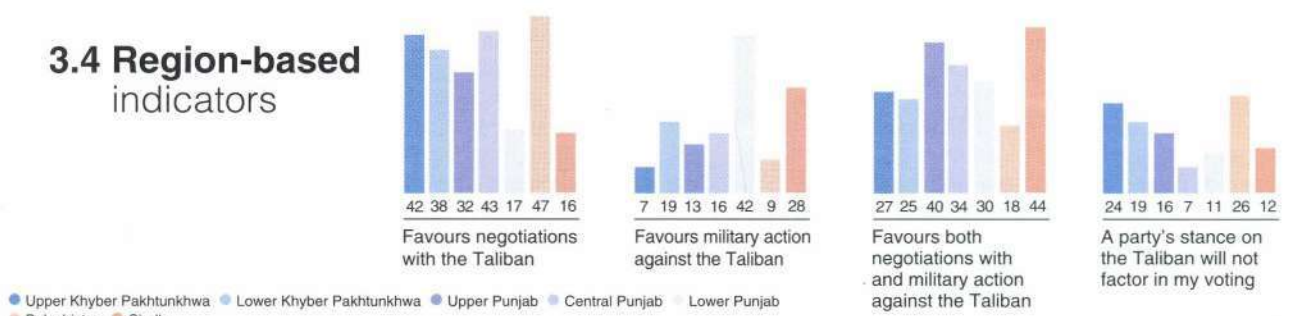


Where public perception of the same groups and the relative "power" of institutions to "sway votes" is concerned, majority of respondents — at 10.4 per cent — identify intelligence agencies as exercising the most influence.

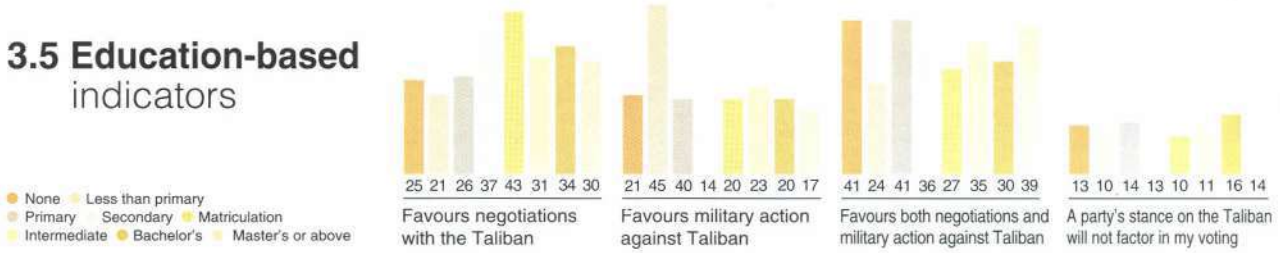
3.3 **Income-based** indicators



3.4 **Region-based** indicators

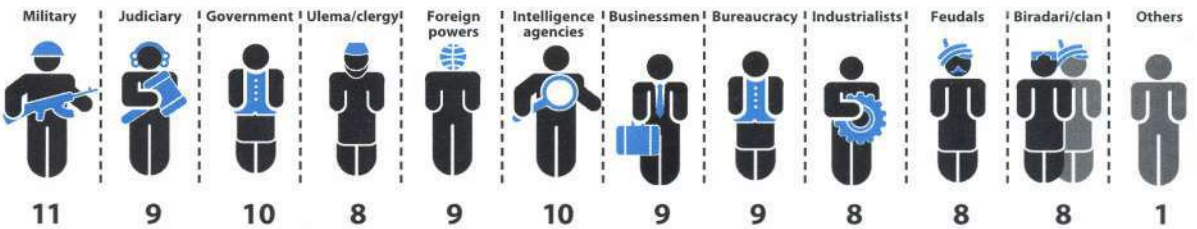


3.5 Education-based indicators



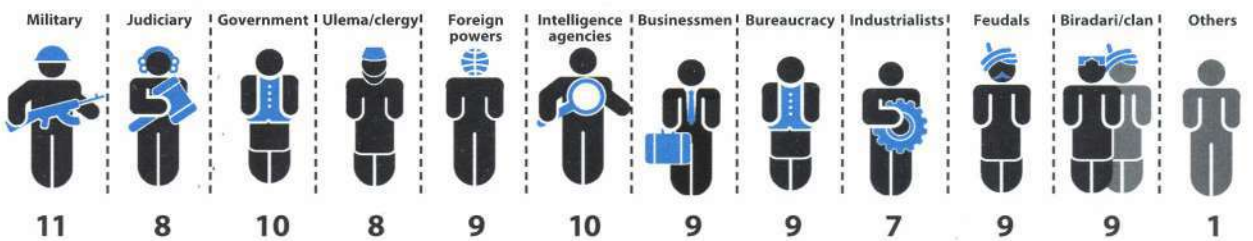
4 | The most powerful institution in Pakistan is...

4.1 Countrywide indicators



5 | The power to sway votes in Pakistan lies with the...

5.1 Countrywide indicators



realisation that the military and intelligence agencies exercise considerable influence over political processes from the sidelines. Their perceived influence in the political domain and ability to influence voting patterns points to the vulnerabilities of the democratic process; this can be described as the democratic deficit that needs to be corrected. Where "power" in politics is concerned, out of a total of 12 institutions and societal groups, the military has been identified as the most influential by 10.8 per cent — the highest number of respondents. Intelligence agencies follow closely, identified as having the strongest influence by 9.6 per cent of respondents. It is interesting to note that the political government's influence has been evaluated as the strongest by 9.7 per cent, a fairly similar number of respondents. However, if we put together non-elected state institutions such as the military, judiciary, bureaucracy and intelligence agencies, the percentage of respondents evaluating them as more influential than the elected government is decisively greater at 38.7 per cent. If we add to this the percentage of those who consider foreign powers, *biradari*/clan groupings and the feudal class as the most influential entities, non-elected institutions and groups are identified as having the most amount of influence over Pakistani politics by 64.1 per cent.

Where public perception of the same groups and the relative "power" of institutions to "sway votes" is concerned, majority of respondents – at 10.4 per cent – identify intelligence agencies as exercising the greatest influence. The military and the civilian government get an equal score of 10.1 per cent each for being most influential; meanwhile, the bureaucracy is identified as wielding the most influence by 9.3 per cent of respondents. Here too, we see non-elected institutions and societal entities together being identified as having the most power by a far greater percentage of respondents than those who see the political government as being the primary source of influence.

Survey results show that despite widespread support for democracy and civilian rule, democratic institutions and processes are overshadowed by non-elected state institutions such as the military, judiciary, intelligence agencies and bureaucracy. This means that Pakistan's

President Zardari meets with the Chief of the Army Staff, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani

democracy has a long way to go before the primacy of elected institutions and processes is firmly established.

These results reveal that popular opinion is unfavourably disposed towards an implementation of martial law and strengthens the view of a large number of Pakistan-watchers that the probability of direct assumption of power by the military has declined since 2007. This positive development needs to be coupled with the fact that people acknowledge the clout of the military and the intelligence agencies from the sidelines. The military thus remains a credible player in Pakistan's governance and political management, albeit from the periphery.

The military's current shift from direct 'rule' to 'role' from the sidelines can be explained with reference to a number of factors since 2007. It can partly be attributed to recognition on the part of the military's top brass of the hazards of sustaining a direct takeover. Since General Kayani's assumption of the army command in November 2007, the army has worked hard to retrieve a reputation which had suffered due to General (retd) Pervez Musharraf's political adventurism in 2006 and 2007.

The mood of the public at large and changes in Pakistan's political and social domains also deter direct military intervention. Pakistan has become increasingly unmanageable from one point of authority. The control of Constitution Avenue in Islamabad no longer ensures control of Pakistan as a whole.

The proliferation of societal organisations and increased political and social activism in Pakistan since 2007 has made it difficult to manage social and political affairs without participatory mechanisms and political accommodation. As more and more people get involved in social and political activities for a variety of reasons, old groups become more active and new social formations surface. Politics becomes noisy and conflict-ridden, making it difficult for institutions such as the military or the bureaucracy to dominate politics and society to the exclusion of these other groups, organisations and political parties.

The military's active involvement in countering terrorism, especially its security operations in Swat/Malakand and the tribal areas since 2009, has forced it to seek political ownership of this role by the civilian political leadership, creating a kind of interdependence between the civilian leadership and the military. The former relies on the military for combatting terrorism, and the latter seeks their political and societal endorsement. Where popular support for military action against the Taliban vis-à-vis negotiations with them is concerned, responses reveal that only 20.6 per cent would prefer voting for a party which favours military action against the Taliban; 31.6 per cent support a policy of negotiation with the Taliban, while 34.9 per cent favour a policy of both negotiation and military action. This data points to weak support for military action, making it important for the military to look towards the civilian government to mobilise more support for their efforts to combat terrorism.

Political parties in the current federal coalition government publicly support the military's efforts in combatting terror. Islamic parties, meanwhile, favour militant groups and the Taliban. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf sympathises with the Taliban, while other political parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League–Nawaz, maintain an ambiguous position on militant groups and their terrorist activities. If the military decides to dislodge the federal government, it would be left alone in its counterterrorism role.

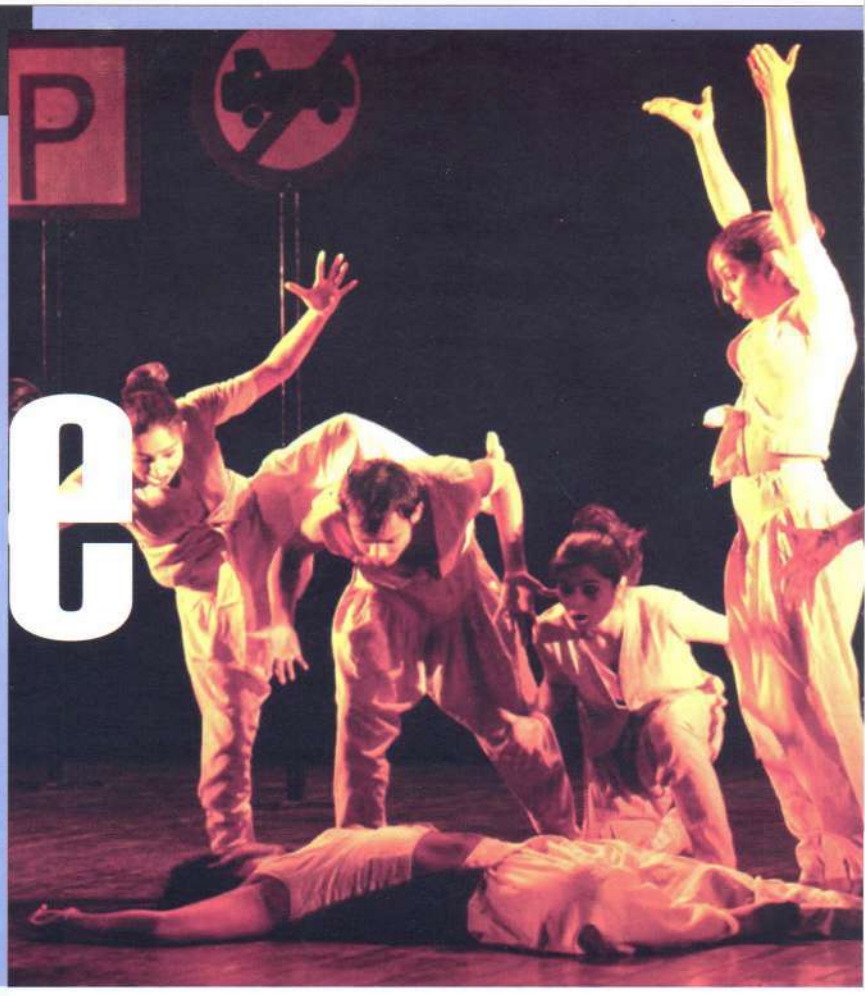
An expanded media has also made political management in an authoritarian manner problematic for any extended period of time. Another important discouraging factor is the hyperactive judiciary, unless the top brass rope it in.

Survey responses clearly indicate that the overall political environment and circumstantial considerations dissuade the military from imposing direct military rule. However, its indirect role from the sidelines impacting the nature and direction of political change is recognised and accepted as a reality. ■

The performing arts

By Rubina Saigol

Culture scene



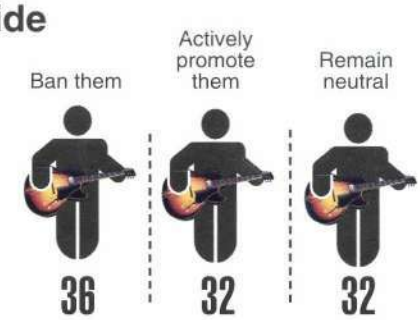
While laments about a shrinking space for the performing arts since the 1980s are often heard among artistes themselves as well as the liberal intelligentsia, criticism of existing forums of music, dance and theatre can be encountered in conservative circles and may also inform certain political parties' ideologies. The results of the Political Barometer present an interesting and rather complex picture of what people from diverse segments of society feel the government's policy towards the performing arts should be.

Opinion regarding the performing arts, such as music, theatre and dance, appears to be divided: a roughly equal percentage of respondents favour a government ban on music, dance and theatre (36 per cent), an active promotion of them (32 per cent), or prefer the government to remain neutral (31.7 per cent). Those who favour a ban are mostly from the 51-70 years age range at 41 per cent, followed by the 18-35 years age range at 37 per cent. Slightly more women than men want performing arts banned and slightly more men actively support them; overall support remains at around one third among both men and women. The strongest support for active promotion comes from Balochistan at 61 per cent, followed by lower Punjab at 58 per cent; this is surprising as both are considered relatively less developed areas, though both do have a long and rich history of folk cultural traditions. This is followed by Sindh at 40 per cent and lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 39 per cent. The strongest support for banning performing arts comes from the relatively prosperous and educated area of central Punjab at 63 per cent, followed by upper Punjab at 41 per cent. It is interesting that the least support for a ban comes from Balochistan where literacy is relative low. This may

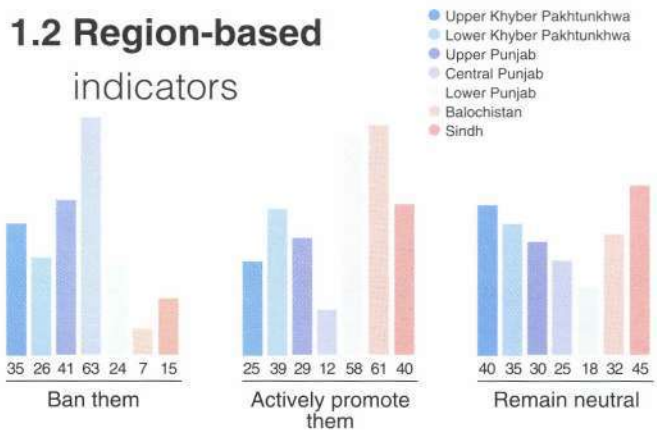
Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

1 | What should the government's policy be towards the performing arts?

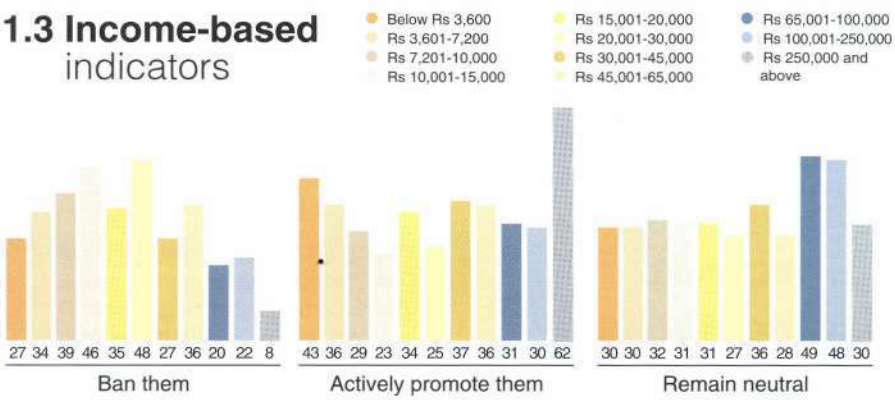
1.1 Countrywide indicators



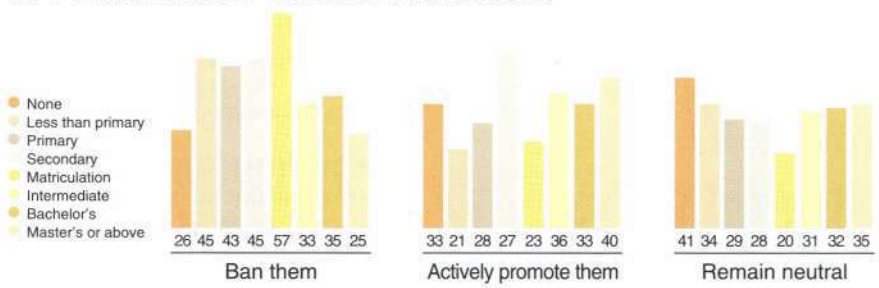
1.2 Region-based indicators



1.3 Income-based indicators



1.4 Education-based indicators



perhaps be taken as an indication that while religious reservations exercise more power in central Punjab, cultural traditions are valued more in Balochistan. Similar results are available through the prism of ethnicity: 54 per cent of Punjabis favour a ban, while over 50 per cent of the Baloch- and Hindko- and Seraiki-speakers favour active promotion.

The greatest support for a ban comes from the 10,000-30,000 rupees per month income group, while the least comes from the higher income group of 250,000 rupees and above who can afford to buy tickets and enjoy performing-arts shows, revealing a classic bell-shaped curve where the middle classes are most against the promotion of the performing arts, while support is greatest at the highest and lowest income levels. There are no significant differences between urban and rural populations in this respect, except that slightly more rural respondents at 38 per cent want such arts banned while more urban populations at 33 per cent express a wish to actively promote them. Respondents with the lowest and highest levels of educational attainment are foremost in supporting the performing arts at 33 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, while opposition is greatest among those who have gained a certain degree of education, such as matriculation (57 per cent), leading to the suggestion that a middle level of education may tend to make people more conservative in their attitude towards music, theatre and dance. ■

By Adnan Rehmat

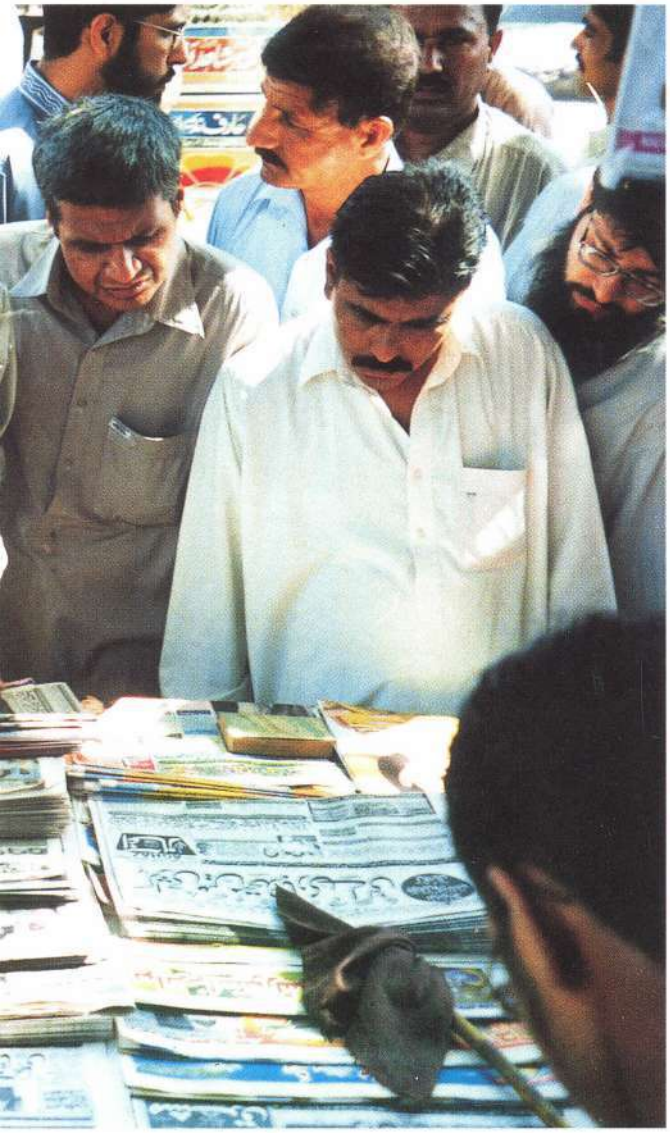
Reality TV

Simplistically speaking, mass media is generated on the basis of public perception. In Pakistan, the national media is burdened with the task of representing the struggles and concerns of a multi-faceted, fragmented democratic society. They say that information is the lifeblood of democracy. And access to pluralistic news, views, opinions and analysis, help develop an informed citizenry that can theoretically make informed political choices.

But a full 10 years after Pakistan embraced independent broadcast media – now spanning about 40 current affairs TV channels and 140 FM radio stations – its broadcast industry now reflects the country's myriad views and distinct patterns are emerging that indicate the level of trust the media enjoys among increasingly sophisticated media consumers across Pakistan's geographic regions and among its demographic groups.

Beguiling reports

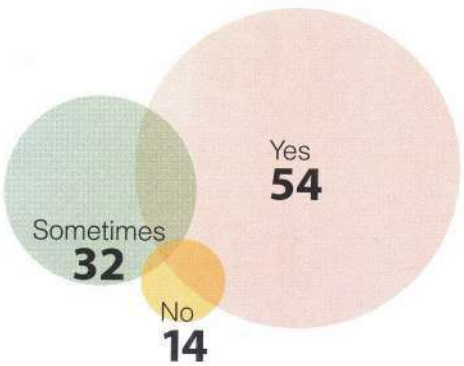
The Political Barometer reveals interesting results; only 18 per cent of Pakistanis surveyed repose



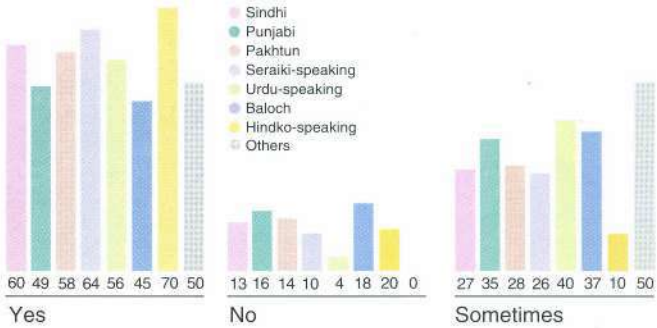
White Star

1 | Do you follow Pakistani politics?

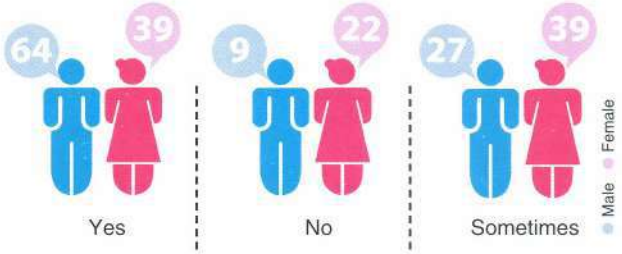
1.1 **Countrywide** indicators



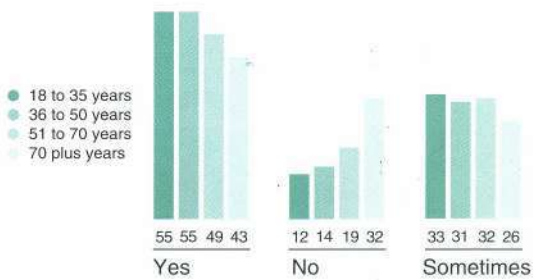
1.2 **Ethnicity-based** indicators



1.3 **Gender-based** indicators



1.4 **Age-wise** indicators



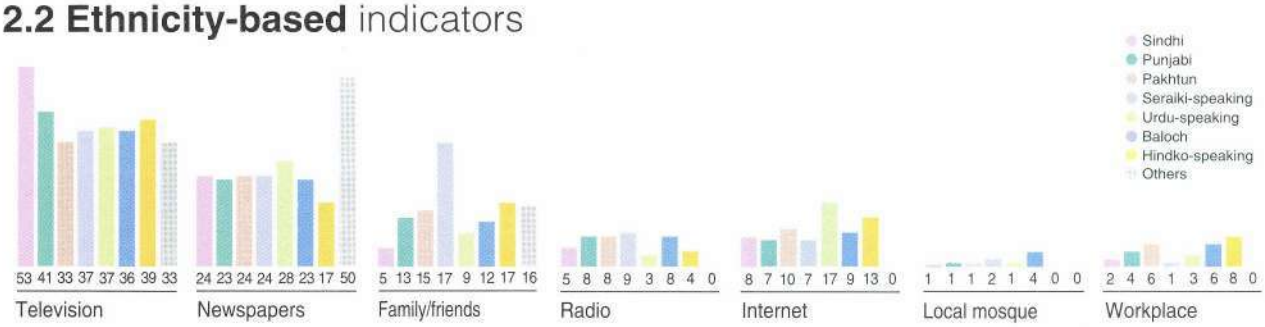
1.5 **Urban/rural** indicators

Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

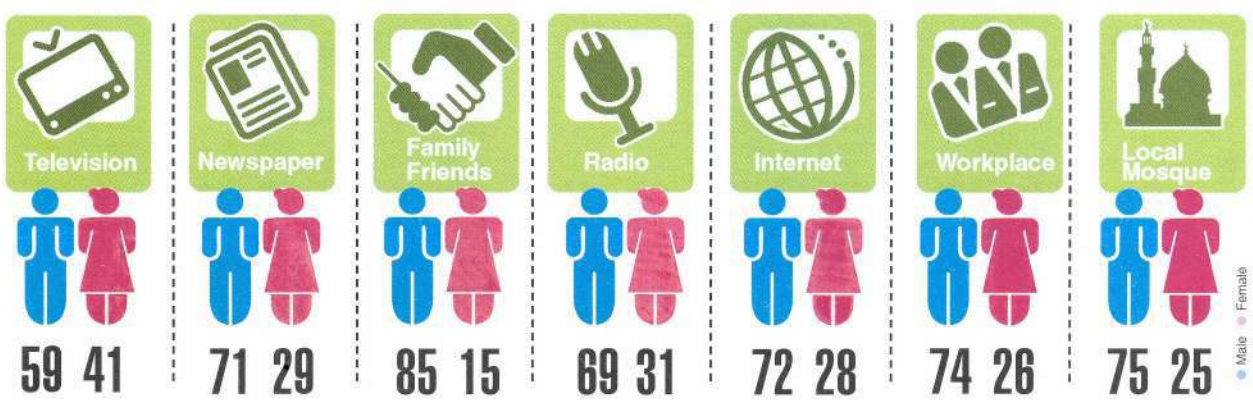
2 | What is your source of information?

2.1 Countrywide indicators

2.2 Ethnicity-based indicators

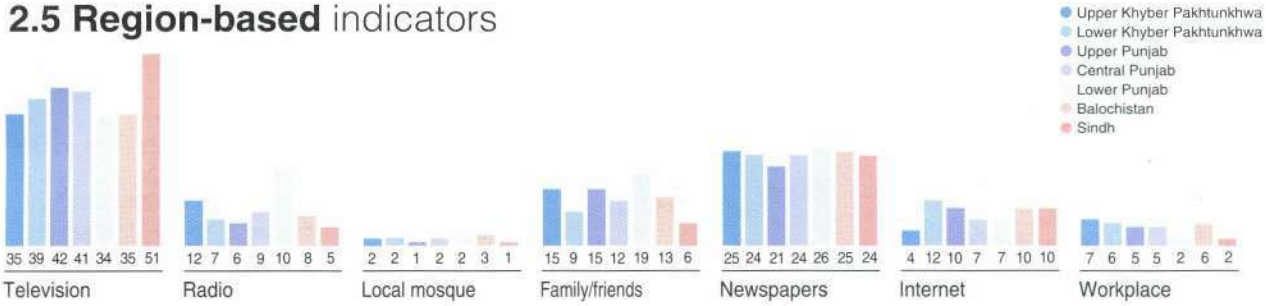


2.3 Gender-based indicators



2.4 Urban/rural indicators

2.5 Region-based indicators



absolute faith in the national media as being unbiased when it comes to reporting on Pakistani politics and political parties. No less than 27 per cent consider the media biased while a majority (55 per cent) feel it swings between being biased and unbiased reporting. Interestingly, more women than men feel the media is biased (28 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively) while the perception that the media is sometimes biased and sometimes not is shared in equal measure (55 per cent) by both genders.

The highest level of trust in the media as being unbiased are seen in respondents from lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (23 per cent) and Sindh (22 per cent) respectively, while 43 per cent of people in upper Punjab and 41 per cent in Balochistan hold the dim view of the media being biased. Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has the highest percentage (73 per cent) of respondents who think the media's performance is a mixed bag of being biased at times and unbiased at others.

What's the link between incomes levels and trust in the Pakistani media? The survey shows that the poorest segment in society – those whose accumulative monthly family income comprises 3,600 rupees or less – see the media as being unbiased when it comes to reporting politics. One in four respondents in this segment hold this view. On the other hand, the demographic earning an income between 65,001 and 100,000 rupees have the least trust in the media with no less than 45 per cent in this group holding the media to be generally biased. Only 2 per cent in this group considers the media unbiased.

The survey also reveals some interesting patterns between the perceptions of trust in media to be unbiased in reporting politics and the educational qualification of respondents who consume the same media. It seems, for instance, it doesn't matter how much or how less educated you are to be wary of what the media projects. In equal measures – 30 per cent each – those who are totally uneducated and those who hold a Master's or higher degree see the media as biased. This pattern persists among those with secondary (27 per cent), matriculate (24 per cent) and intermediate (26 per cent) levels of education considering the media to be biased, while 15 per cent with secondary, 16 per cent with matriculate and 17 per cent with intermediate education believing it to be unbiased media.

Forty two per cent of the survey respondents use television as their source of information on Pakistani politics

Do talk shows talk sense?

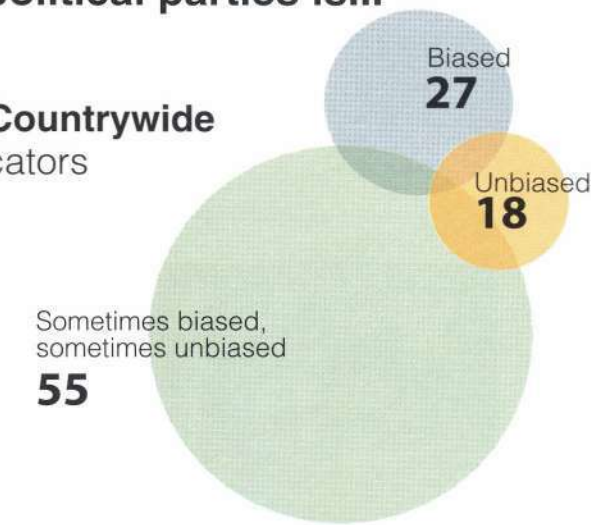
Interestingly, the Pakistani public prefers talk shows on current affairs as a prime time staple rather than entertainment, even a decade after the airwaves were opened for private ownership. The survey shows a majority of respondents (53 per cent) consider talk shows to have aided them in enhancing their political awareness. A significant percentage (35 per cent), however, comes away saying that talk shows have no effect on raising their political awareness, while 12 per cent think that talk shows actually decreased their level of political awareness.

More men (56 per cent) than women (49 per cent) feel that talk shows improve their political astuteness. When it comes to a geographic breakdown of respondents who were asked whether media talk shows increase their level of political awareness, there is a remarkable equanimity of views among those based in Balochistan, lower and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and lower Punjab — 60 per cent from each region affirming the efficacy of talk shows in this purpose. In the same regions, conversely, only 9 per cent each in Balochistan and lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2 per cent in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa felt that talk shows decreased their awareness about politics.

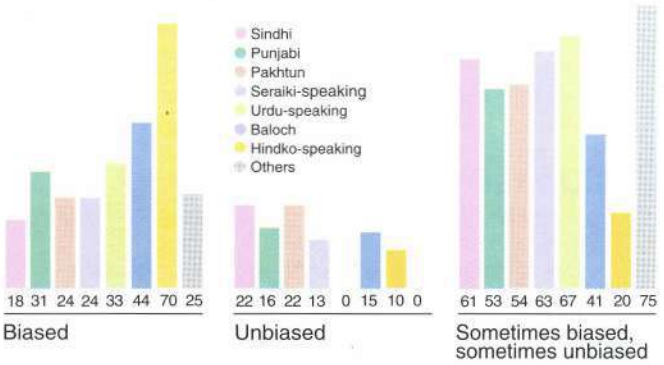
This pattern persists among media consumers in urban and rural areas with nearly half of the respondents from rural regions (49 per cent) and 58 per cent in urban

3 | National media's reporting on Pakistani politics and political parties is...

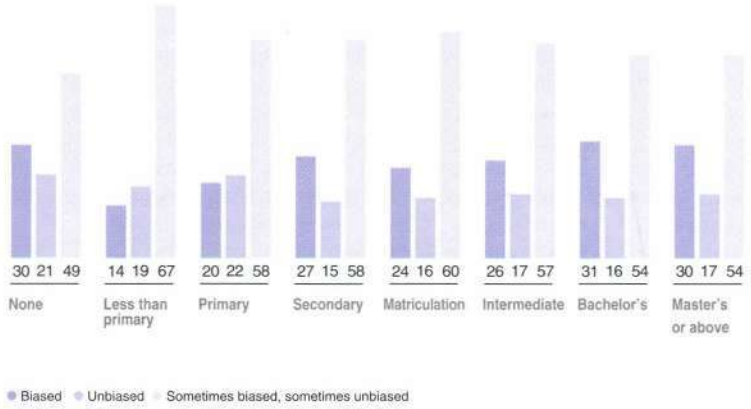
3.1 Countrywide indicators



3.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



3.3 Education-based indicators



dwellings believing themselves to be better off understanding politics through talk shows. As for income groups, there emerges a consistent pattern where no matter what the income (from families earning less than 3,600 rupees to those making up to 250,000 rupees), no less than 41 per cent in each group feel that talk shows help them understand politics better. The survey also indicates that a considerably larger percentage of respondents (between 36 per cent to 63 per cent), across all educational qualifications, come away with raised political awareness after following discussions conducted on talk shows.

Veiled media

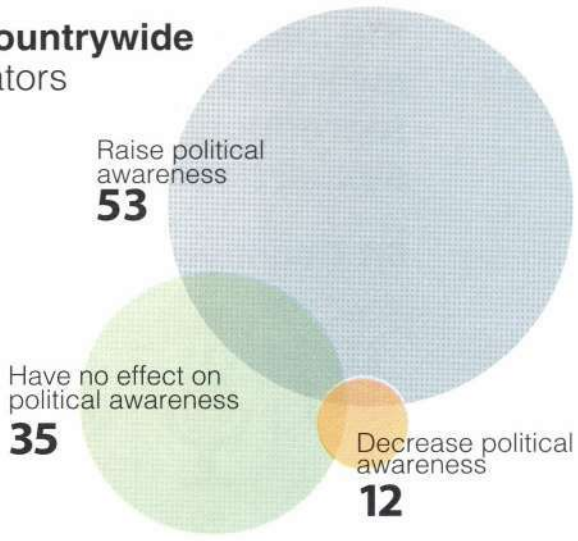
Whether the talk shows are making people more inclusive or pluralistic, what the media in general is not doing is making its consumers more tolerant to the idea of liberal approaches to media content when it comes to risqué content. An overwhelming majority (73 per cent) of those questioned, thought sexually explicit content should be banned from all media including newspapers, TV channels and Internet. While 20 per cent want no government interference in censorship, 7 per cent actually want the government to promote sexually explicit content.

Interestingly, respondents of all ages above 18 years of age seem united on the issue of banning explicit content, 72 per cent each in the age brackets of 18 to 35 and 36 to 60 support this, while 78 per cent of 51 to 70 years old and no less than 81 per cent of those over 70 years want the media shunning explicit content. Only around 7 per cent of respondents from the older age brackets back the promotion of explicit content. Gender too has negligible effect when it comes to content preferences; 74 per cent of men and 73 per cent women want explicit content banned while 7 per cent of respondents of either gender favour its promotion.

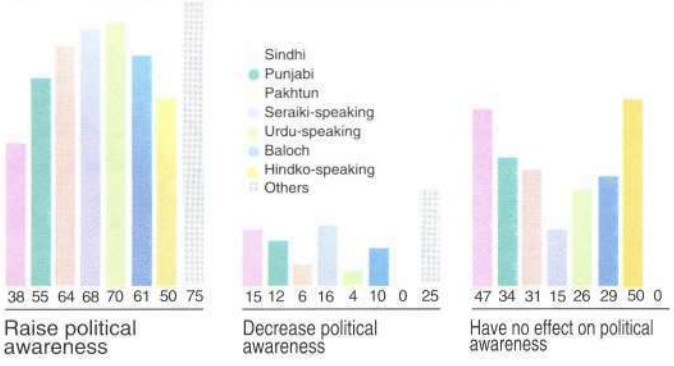
The only variations when it comes to those in favour of banning or promoting explicit media content are found in geographic regions. Those from central Punjab (88 per cent) and upper Punjab (82 per cent) distinctively want a ban on indiscreet content, while only 53 per cent from both Balochistan and Sindh support such a ban. Among income groups, the most vigorous proponents

4 | National media talk shows...

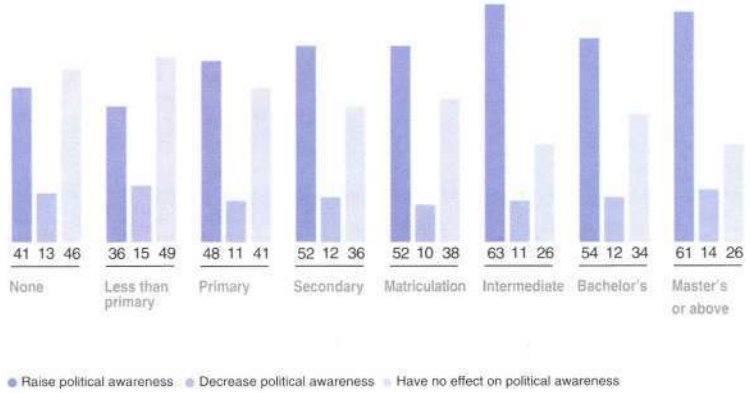
4.1 Countrywide indicators



4.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



4.3 Education-based indicators



of censorship are middle-income earners (20,000 rupees and 30,000 rupees) comprising 81 per cent of the respondents, while only 54 per cent of those who make 250,000 rupees or more support a ban. Among those in favour of explicit content promoted by the government 15 per cent earn 250,000 rupees or more while the lowest income group supporting this stance makes between 3,600 rupees and 7,200 rupees. More or less the same percentages of urbanites and rural dwellers support and oppose the ban.

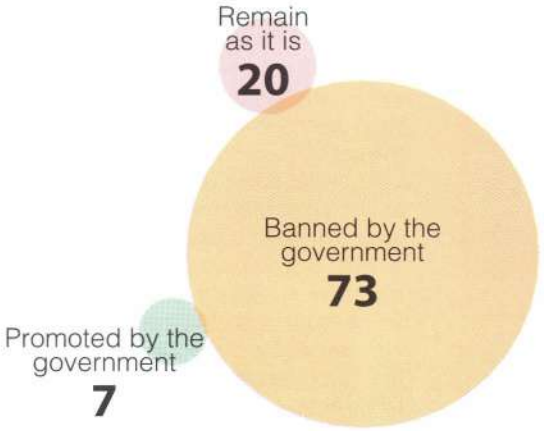
But what about raising awareness about sexual and reproductive health issues through broadcast and social media? The survey shows 52 per cent of respondents supporting this, 28 per cent opposing it and 20 per cent remaining undecided. Among the four different age group brackets, more or less the same percentages prevail among those who oppose and support raising awareness about these issues as well as those who are undecided. Interestingly, slightly more men (53 per cent) than women (49 per cent) support sex education through media while fewer men (26 per cent) than women (31 per cent) oppose it while 21 per cent of males and 19 per cent of females remain unsure about the issues.

The majority of supporters of sex education through media are based in upper Punjab (62 per cent) and Sindh (60 per cent) while as many as 44 per cent in central Punjab and 29 per cent in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are opposed to utilisation of the media for raising awareness of sexual health. Among income groups, the most liberal supporters (69 per cent) of sex education via media are those who make 250,000 rupees or more and the most conservative (18 per cent) are also those with relatively higher incomes by Pakistani standards (65,000 rupees to 100,000 rupees).

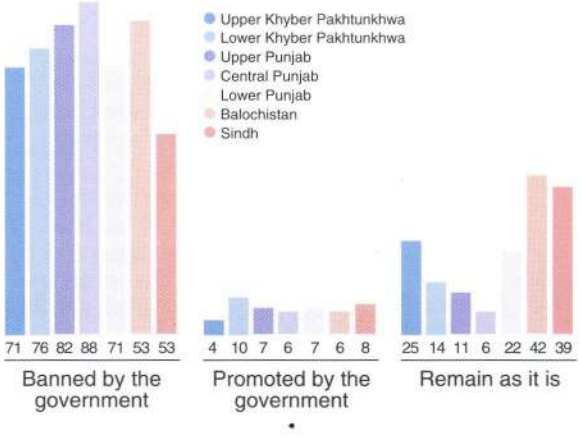
When it comes to educating Pakistanis through the national media, the bottom line seems to be that despite a reserved approach, the public is happy to follow the fast-changing drama of Pakistani politics, but a generally conservative attitude still exists regarding the exposure given to taboo societal issues. ■

5 | Sexually explicit content from newspapers, television channels and/or the internet should be...

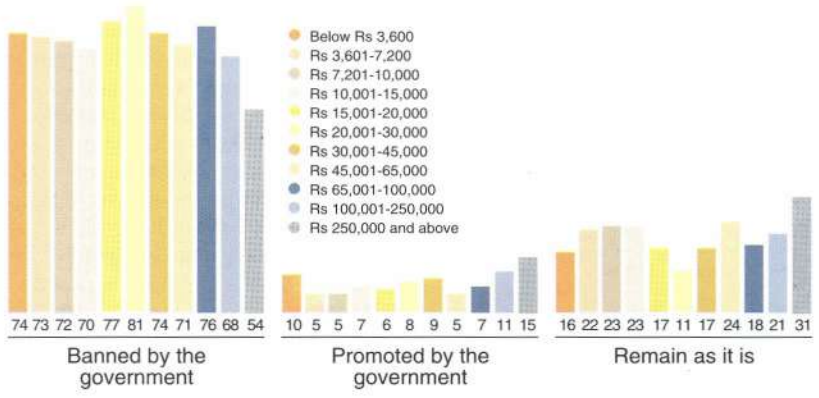
5.1 Countrywide indicators



5.2 Region-based indicators

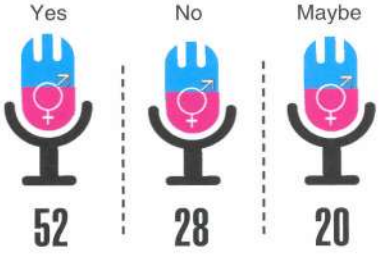


5.3 Income-based indicators



6 | Should the government utilise newspapers, television channels and the internet to raise awareness regarding reproductive and other sexual health issues?

6.1 Countrywide indicators



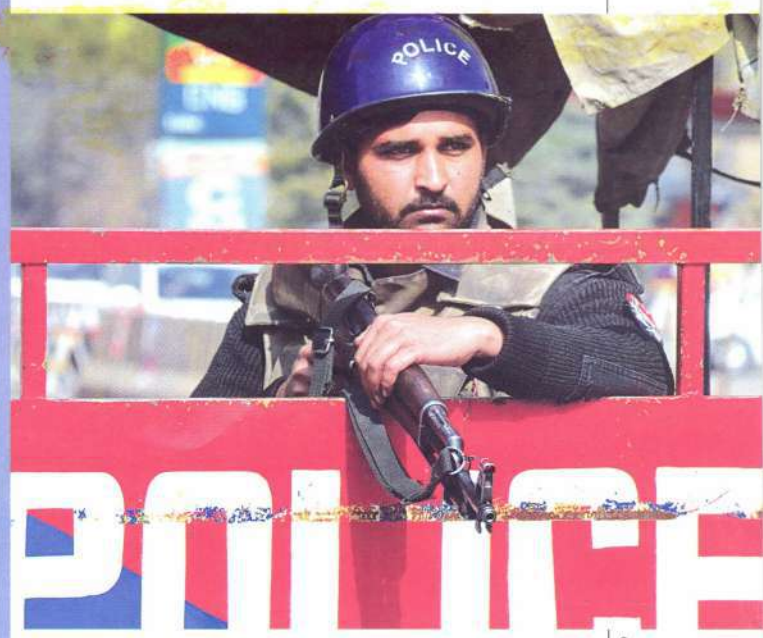
6.2 Gender-based indicators

An overwhelming majority (88 per cent) of respondents from central Punjab think that sexually explicit content should be banned from all media including newspapers, TV channels and the internet.

By Syed Jaffar Ahmed

State of neglect

Central to the multifarious crises being faced by Pakistan today is the issue of governance, the failure of which has compounded numerous challenges for the country. Given the progressive decline of the state's writ, the country has come to a stage where its very future is being questioned, within the country as well as abroad. Paradoxically, Pakistan started with what the famous social scientist Hamza Alavi described as an 'overdeveloped state'. It was a state identified with two major institutions – the bureaucracy and the military – enjoying a monopoly over state power. With other segments of society and even privileged classes, such as the feudals, being far below these two institutions in terms of actual political power, the bureaucracy and the military dictated the course of events, at least in the first two decades after independence.



AFP

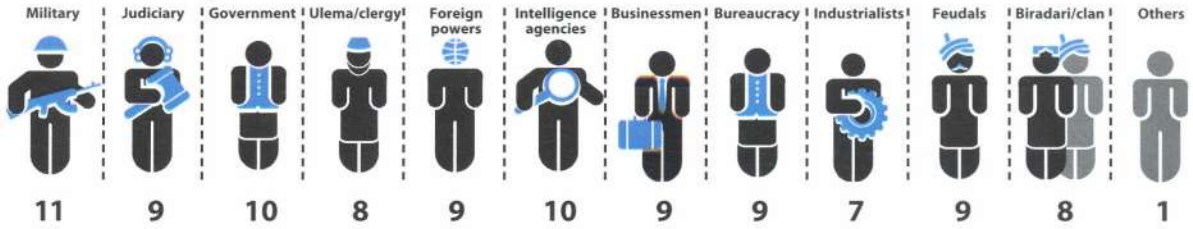
After the break-up of Pakistan in 1971, the bureaucracy's position within the power structure became secondary to the military which became the most powerful institution. However, two factors caused the state's authority to decline after the 1970s. The extraterritorial ambitions of the military-led state – such as its involvement in Afghanistan, pursuit of strategic depth extending up to Central Asia, and the *jihadist* project in Kashmir – weakened the military's hold over its own country, so much so that at times it had to face the militant religious outfits that it had itself created. Secondly, the vast changes taking place in Pakistani society demanded a readjustment in state priorities and a much more responsible set of institutions which could not be provided by the state. As a result, the state gradually became irrelevant vis-à-vis a very demanding society which, in the absence of a mediator to harmonise its diverse interests – a role that could and should have been fulfilled by the state – took to finding solutions on its own. Hence the chaos and conflict that defines today's Pakistan.

Over the years, the military-bureaucracy combination has prevented due political process from taking root in the country. The fact that the political process has been punctuated by four periods of military rule covering almost half of the country's history has created an almost persistent imbalance of institutions. Despite the completion of the present parliament's tenure of five years, one cannot say that the imbalance has been corrected. We still hear a lot about an

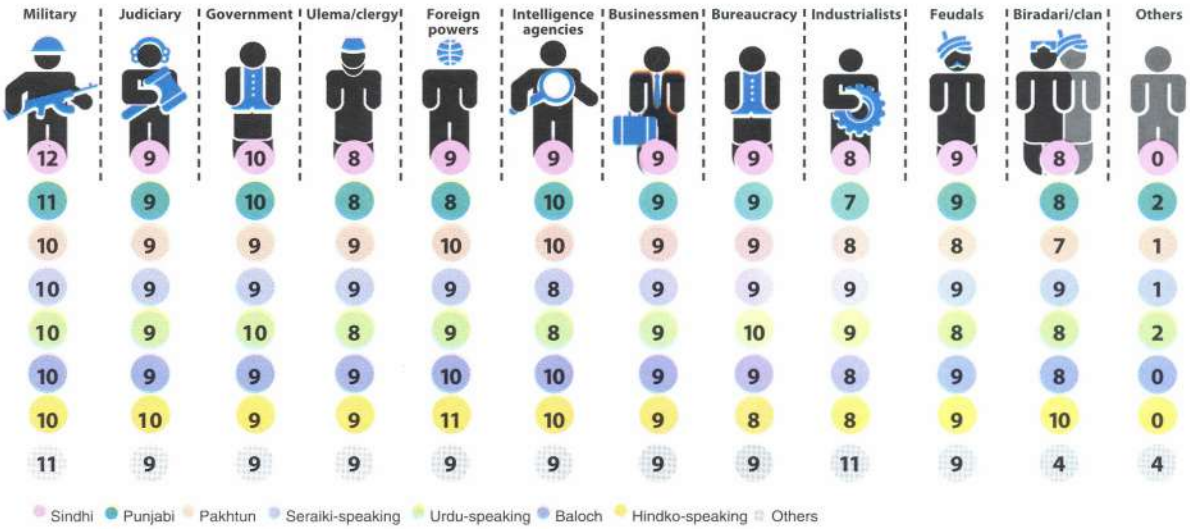
Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

1 The most powerful institution in Pakistan is...

1.1 Countrywide indicators

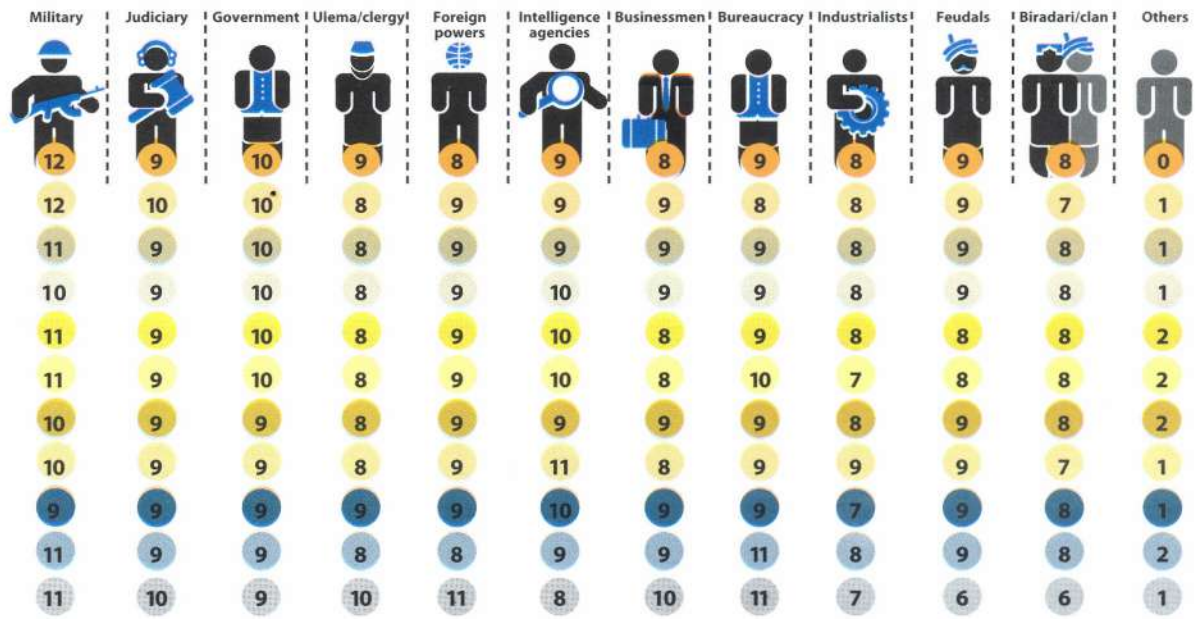


1.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



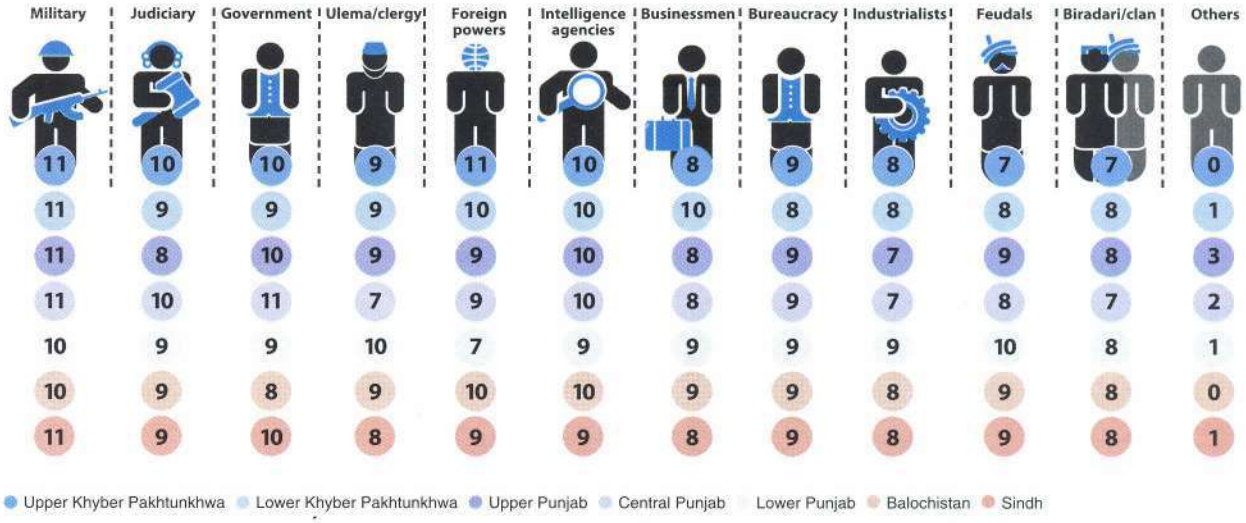
Sindhi Punjabi Pakhtun Seraiki-speaking Urdu-speaking Baloch Hindko-speaking Others

1.3 Income-based indicators



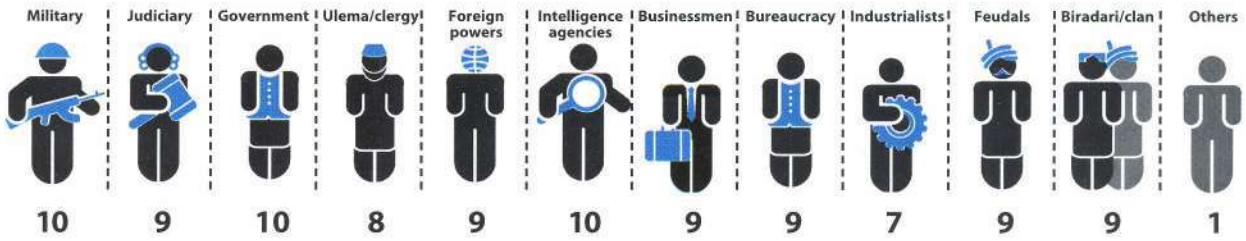
Below Rs 3,600 Rs 3,601-7,200 Rs 7,201-10,000 Rs 10,001-15,000 Rs 15,001-20,000 Rs 20,001-30,000 Rs 30,001-45,000
Rs 45,001-65,000 Rs 65,001-100,000 Rs 100,001-2,50,000 Rs 250,000 and above

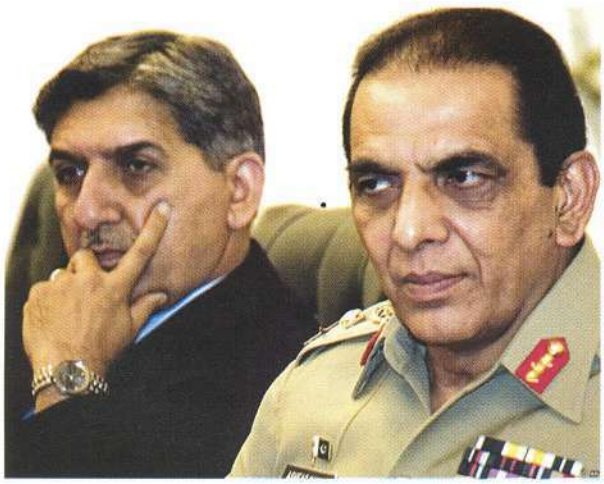
1.4 Region-based indicators



2 The power to sway votes in Pakistan lies with the...

2.1 Countrywide indicators





Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and former Inter-Services Intelligence Chief Ahmed Shuja Pasha

establishment which on many an occasion has been discussed in the last five years as being anathema to the political dispensation. So, what do Pakistanis think about where we stand in our journey towards democratisation? Responses from the Herald's survey yield some interesting insights.

Regarding the relative strength of institutions, the single largest group of the respondents (10.8 per cent) regard the military as the most powerful institution. This is followed by the civilian government at 9.7 per cent, intelligence agencies at 9.6 per cent, the bureaucracy at 9.1 per cent, foreign powers at 8.9 per cent, the business community at 8.7 per cent, feudals at 8.6 per cent, the ulema at 8.3 per cent and *biradari*/clan networks at 7.9 per cent. If the percentage of military and intelligence agencies is put together, this goes to make 20.4 per cent, which is far ahead of other institutions. The emergent trend is well in line with the reality of military's dominance, acknowledged by almost all analysts within and outside Pakistan.

As regards the capacity to sway votes in politics, intelligence agencies are at the top of the list at 10.4 per cent, both the military and government are second at 10.1 per cent each, and the bureaucracy is third at 9.3 per cent. In the past, the manner in which elections were engineered through intelligence agencies seems to have been remembered by the electorate. ■

By Rubina Saigol

On the right track

The Political Barometer's examination of attitudes towards women's rights – based on six variables, namely age, gender, location (urban or rural), ethnicity, income level and educational attainment – yields interesting insights about evolving attitudes with regards to issues such as women's right to education, participation in the workforce, sports as well as politics, and freedom from the threat of violence. An overview of the survey's findings is presented here, followed by general observations which emerge from a study of broader trends.

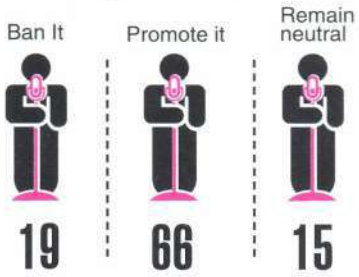
What should the government's policy be on women contesting elections?

Over two-thirds of the respondents believe that the government should promote women's right to contest elections; around one-fifth favour a ban on this right. The youngest participants strongly favour women contesting the elections while the older age groups express a level of disapproval. Both male and female respondents support this right, however more women, at 70 per cent, than men, at 63 per cent, are in favour of women contesting elections. Except for central Punjab where only 41 per cent of the respondents are supportive, all

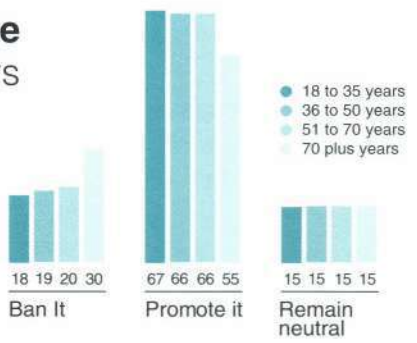
other regions were strongly supportive of women's electoral participation. In lower Punjab, Sindh and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, four-fifths of the respondents support women's electoral participation. Those with the lowest and highest income levels favour the idea more as compared to those earning between 20,000 rupees and 30,000 rupees per month, although over 50 per cent of the group [mentioned] favour women's participation in the electoral process. Over 60 per cent of both urban and rural participants support this right although more rural than urban respondents favour a ban. Those at the matriculation level are most likely to oppose this right and favour a ban than at other educational levels. Over 70 per cent of those with no education or those with a Master's degree and above support the idea. Urdu-speaking, Seraiki-speaking

1 | What should the government's policy be on women contesting elections?

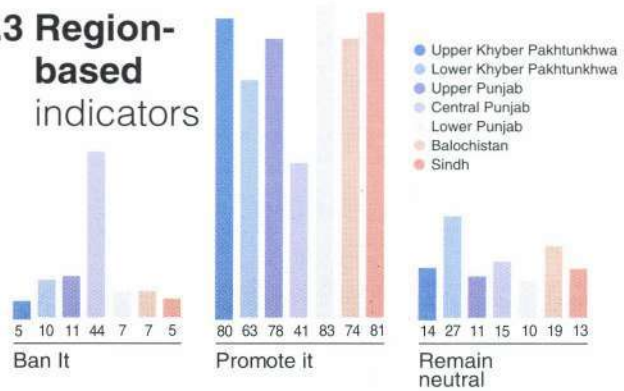
1.1 Countrywide indicators



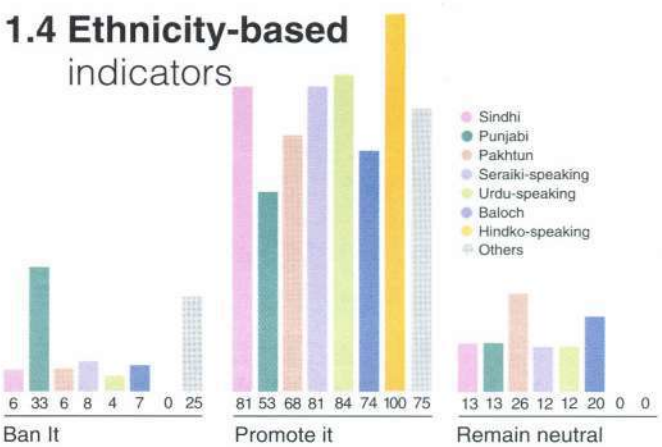
1.2 Age-wise indicators



1.3 Region-based indicators



1.4 Ethnicity-based indicators

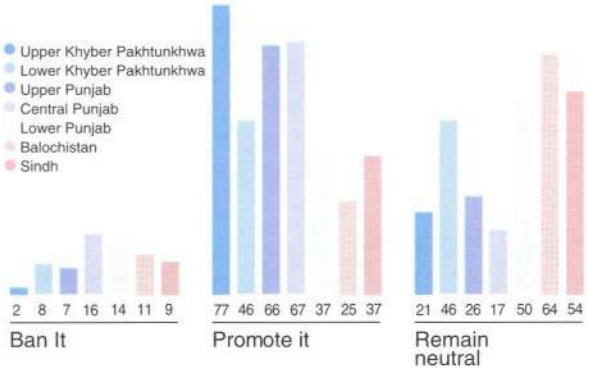


Note: All statistics are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

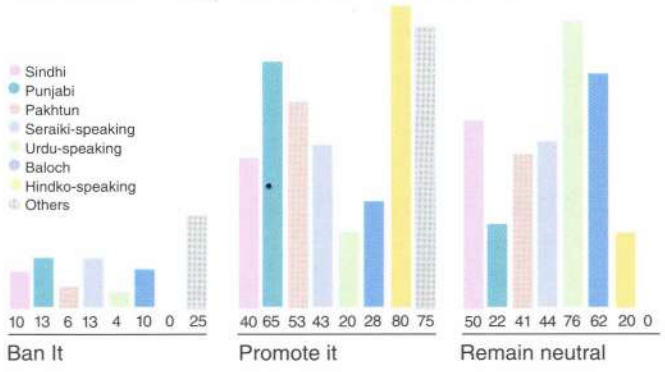
2 | What should the government's policy on women wearing the veil/hijab/niqab be when they step outside their homes?

2.1 **Countrywide** indicators

2.2 **Region-based** indicators

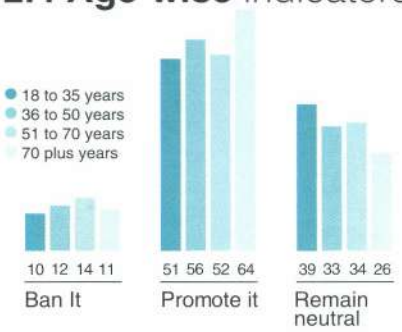


2.3 **Ethnicity-based** indicators

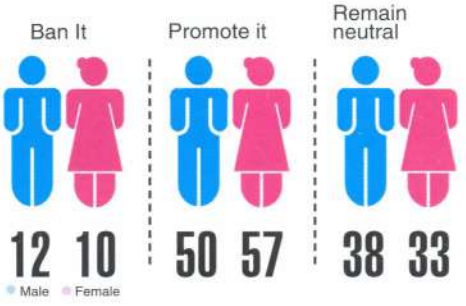


Support for wearing the veil is strongest among the Hindko-speakers and Punjabis, followed by Pakhtuns. Urdu-speaking respondents are least supportive of women being veiled when they step outside their homes.

2.4 **Age-wise** indicators



2.5 **Gender-based** indicators

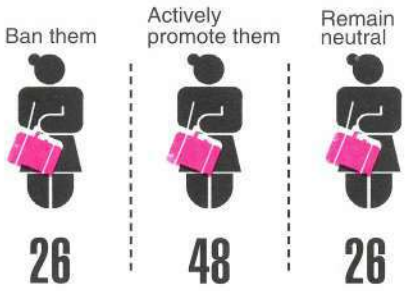


White Star

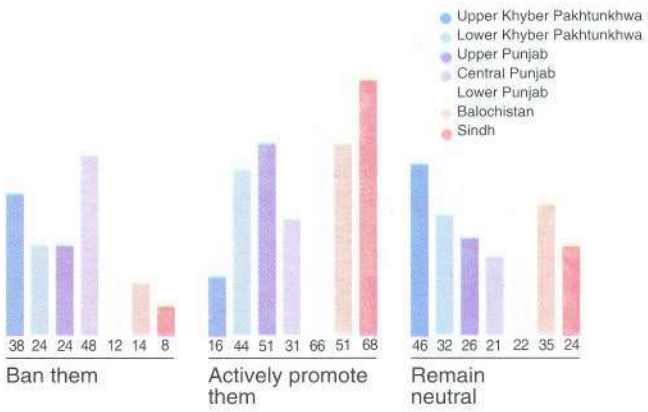
Fifty seven per cent of women across the country believe that the government should support the wearing of the veil for women when they leave their homes

3 | What should the government's policy be on women working alongside men in workplaces?

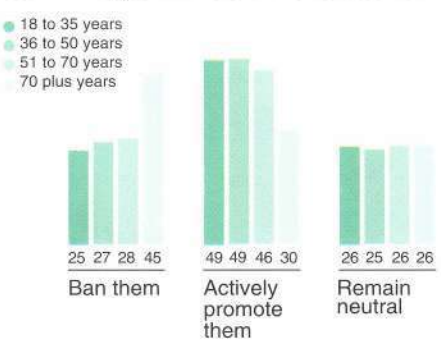
3.1 **Countrywide** indicators



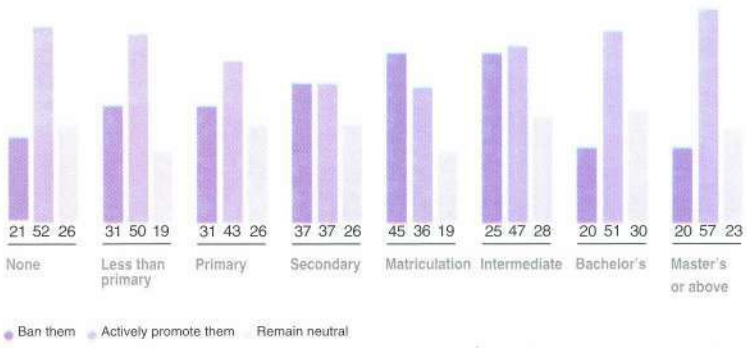
3.3 **Region-based** indicators



3.2 **Age-wise** indicators



3.4 **Education-based** indicators



and Sindhi respondents strongly favour the idea while the strongest support for a ban (53 percent) came from the Punjab.

What should the government's policy be on women wearing the veil/niqab/hijab when they step outside their homes?

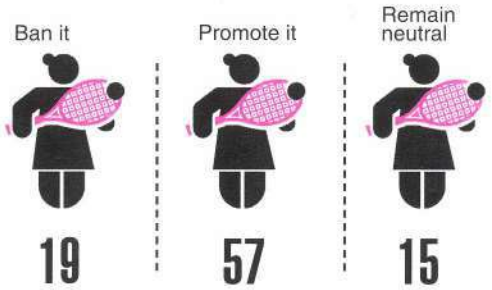
On the issue of whether or not women should wear the veil, hijab or niqab when they step outside the home, 53 per cent of respondents across the country are in favour of the veil, while 11 per cent support a ban. The support for the veil is strongest among the middle aged group of 35-50 years and those who are 70 or above. A higher percentage of female respondents at 57 per cent than male respondents at 50 per cent favour the veil. The strongest support for this practice comes from upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and central and upper Punjab where 77 per cent, 67 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively, support the wearing of the veil. The support for the veil varies with income levels with those earning 15,000 rupees to 30,000 rupees favouring the practice while those with incomes greater than 250,000 rupees support it less, at 23 per cent. However, this practice is also supported by the second highest income category of 100,000 to 250,000 rupees per month, which indicates a mixed trend. Location does not appear to be a variable as approximately equal numbers of urban and rural respondents support the wearing of the veil. As regards to educational levels, over 60 per cent of those having done their Matriculation or secondary-level education favour veiling, as opposed to 40 per cent of those with a Master's degree or above. Support for the veil is strongest among Hindko-speakers and Punjabis, followed by Pakhtuns.

What should the government's policy be on women working alongside men in the work place?

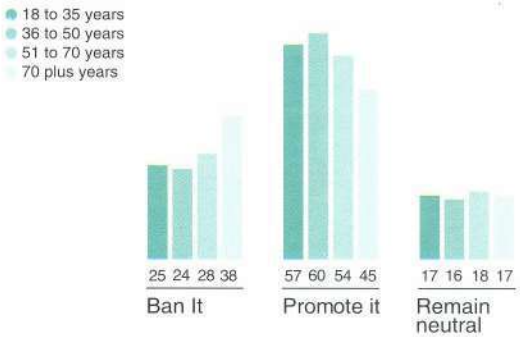
On the issue of whether or not women should work alongside men, 48 per cent support the idea while 26 per cent of the respondents want to ban the practice. Women's right to work alongside men is supported by the younger age group of 18-35 years and the age group of 36 to 50 years, while people

4 | What should the government's policy be on women taking part in sports?

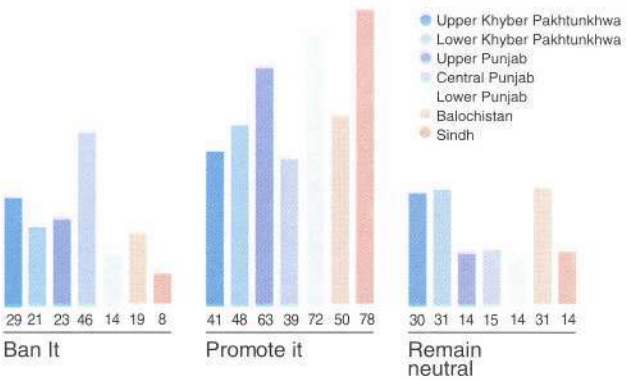
4.1 Countrywide indicators



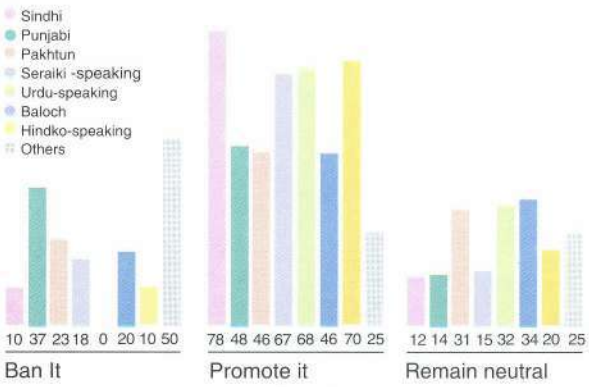
4.3 Age-wise indicators



4.2 Region-based indicators



4.4 Ethnicity-based indicators



from older age groups are less inclined to agree with it. More women at 52 per cent support the idea than men at 44 per cent. This right receives the greatest support from Sindh and lower Punjab, where nearly two-thirds of the respondents express support. Over half the respondents from Balochistan are also in favour of women working alongside men. Those who oppose the idea are mostly from central Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 48 per cent and 38 per cent of the respondents disapprove of the idea. With regard to income levels, the strongest support for the idea comes from the lowest and highest income levels, while respondents from middle income categories are much more likely to disapprove. Location also seems to be a factor as more urban than rural respondents support this right. With regard to educational levels, those with the lowest and highest educational levels favour the practice while those at the matriculation level are most likely to disapprove. Interestingly, the strongest support comes from those with a Master's degree, followed by those with no education. In terms of ethnicity, the Hindko-speaking, Sindhi, Urdu-speaking and Seraiki-speaking respondents are fairly strongly supportive of women working alongside men, while the desire to ban the practice comes most strongly from the Punjabi respondents at 38 per cent.

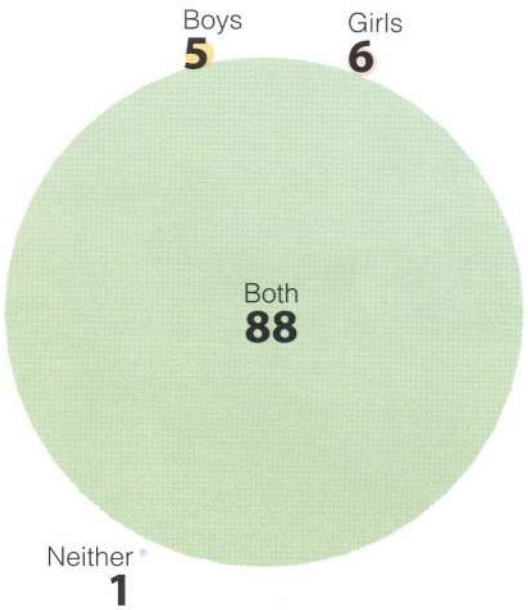
What should the government's policy be on women taking part in sports?

In relation to women's participation in sports, 57 per cent of people want to promote it while approximately one-fifth of the respondents favour a ban. Younger respondents, below the age of 50, are much more likely to express support, while opposition is greater among older age groups. Respondents from Sindh favour this with 78 per cent expressing support, followed by lower Punjab at 72 per cent. The strongest opposition comes from central Punjab where 46 per cent prefer a ban on women's participation in sports. The highest and lowest income brackets favour participation, while relatively greater opposition can be found among those with an income level of 20,000 to 30,000 rupees per month. Over 55 per cent of both urban and rural participants support the idea; however more rural than urban participants favour a ban.

Women's right to work alongside men is supported by a younger age group of 18 to 35 year olds, while those who are older are less inclined to agree

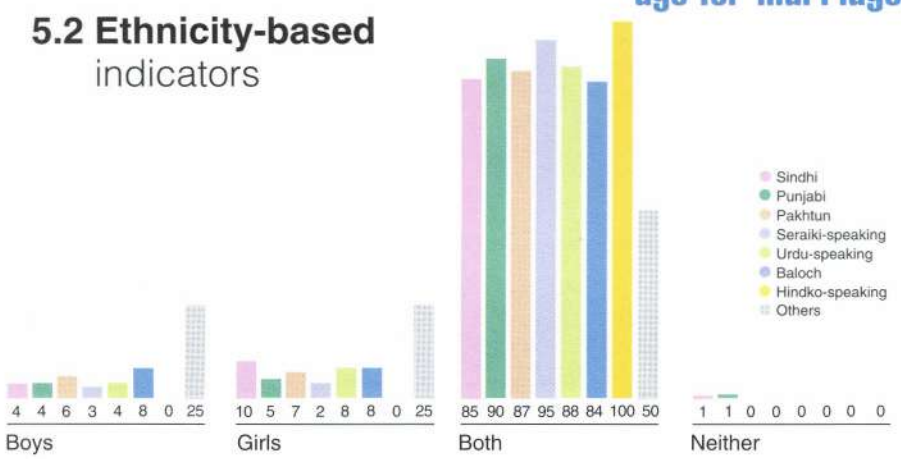
5 | Who should be given preference in education?

5.1 Countrywide indicators



An overwhelming 94 per cent of all respondents strongly advocate that the acceptable age for women getting married is 16 years or above. There may be a correlation with the belief in girls' right to education and perceptions about the age for marriage.

5.2 Ethnicity-based indicators



Participants with the least education support women's participation in sports while those at the matriculation and secondary levels are least supportive. Sindhi, Hindko-speaking and Urdu-speaking participants are strongly supportive, while Punjabis have the highest percentage of those opposing the idea.

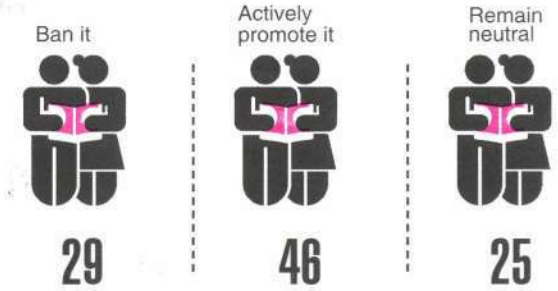
To what extent should women's right to education be supported?

A whopping 88 per cent believe that there should be no discrimination on the basis of gender in regard to education. A slightly higher percentage of women than men want education for both girls and boys. Over 80 per cent in all the provinces want education for both boys and girls. There is virtually no variation by location as both urban and rural respondents strongly support educating both. Approximately, 88 per cent of all educational groups favour education for both. All ethnic groups strongly support educating both, with Hindko-speaking, Seraiki-speaking and Punjabi respondents being the staunchest supporters.

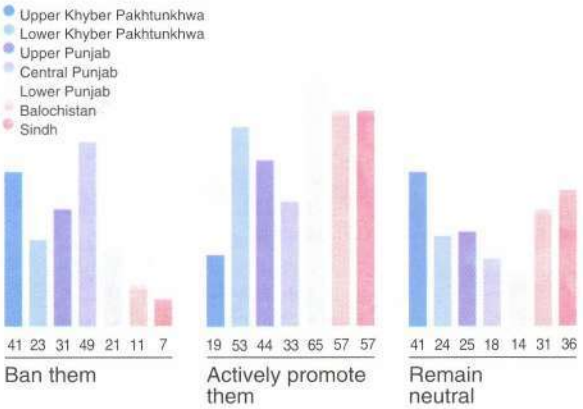
Where the question of co-

6 | What should the government's policy be on co-education in Pakistan?

6.1 **Countrywide** indicators

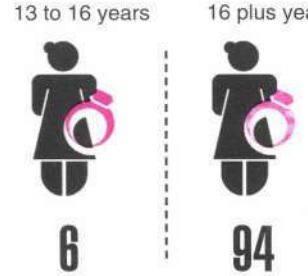


6.2 **Region-based** indicators



7 | What is an acceptable age for women to get married?

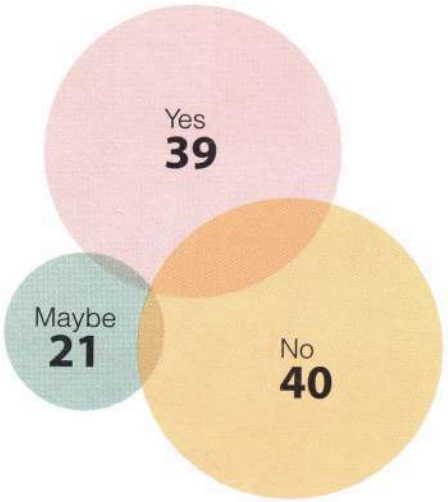
7.1 **Countrywide** indicators



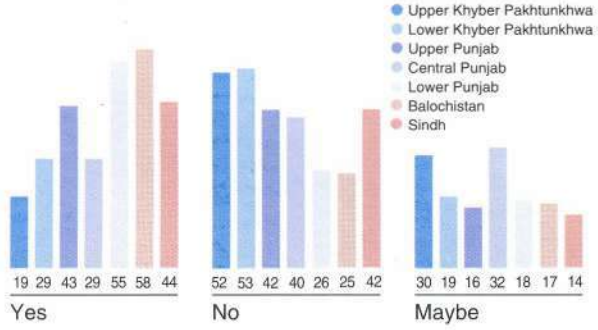
The strongest opposition to co-education comes from central Punjab at 49 per cent

8 | Should women have the right to divorce?

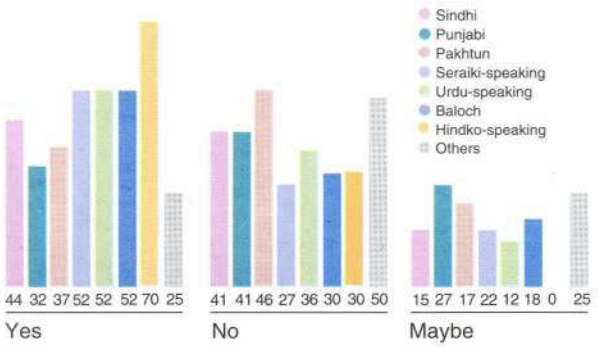
8.1 Countrywide indicators



8.2 Region-based indicators



8.3 Ethnicity-based indicators



A 63 per cent majority of the respondents find honour killing unacceptable. Eleven per cent accept the practice and 19 per cent find it to be occasionally justified. Over 60 per cent of all age groups and men and women find it unacceptable.

education is concerned, 46 per cent of the respondents believe that the government should promote it while 29 favour a ban, with the strongest opposition to co-education coming from central Punjab at 49 per cent and those who have achieved a matriculation-level of education at 47 per cent.

An overwhelming 94 per cent of all respondents strongly advocate that the acceptable age for women to get married is 16 years or above. Strong support for this is visible across age groups, gender, educational and income levels and location. There may be a correlation with the belief in girls' right to education and perceptions about the age for marriage.

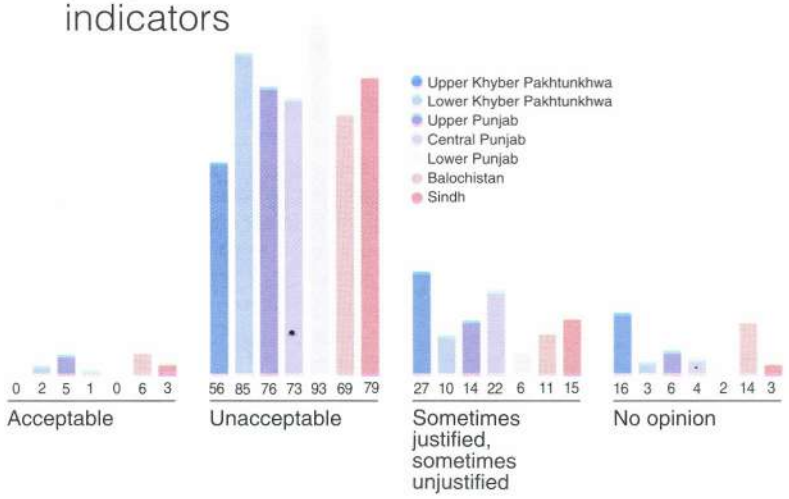
Should women have the right to divorce?

When asked whether women should have the right to divorce, 40 per cent answer in the negative and 39 per cent give a positive reply. There are no significant differences with regard to age, as respondents in all age brackets are inclined to deny this right more than upholding it. More women, at 42 per cent, than men, at 36 per cent, uphold the right to divorce. In Balochistan and lower Punjab over 50 per cent support this right, while over 50 per cent in lower and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa oppose it. A majority of the lowest and highest income levels support the right to divorce while the lower end of the middle class frown upon it. More respondents in urban areas favour the right while more rural participants oppose it. Whereas variation based on education levels is concerned, over 50 per cent of those with a Master's degree and above support the right to divorce while over 50 per cent of those at the primary level oppose it. The strongest support for the right to divorce is among Hindko-speaking respondents, followed by the Seraiki-speaking, Urdu-speaking and the Baloch, all at 52 per cent. The strongest opposition is expressed by Pakhtun participants.

9 | What is your opinion on domestic violence?

9.1 Countrywide indicators

9.2 Region-based indicators



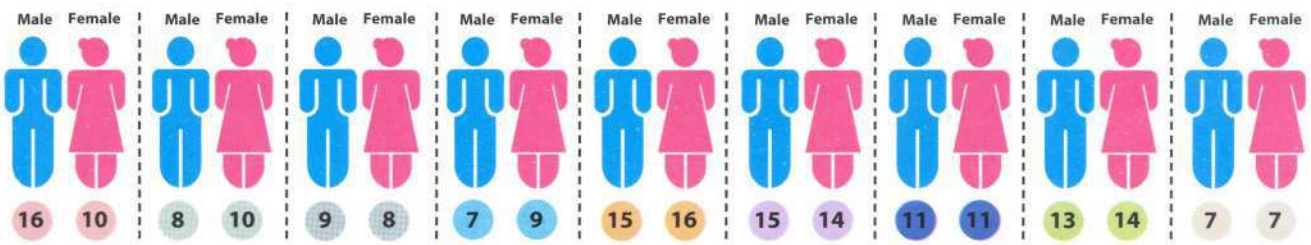
Honour killing is considered most unacceptable by respondents in lower Punjab at 79 per cent and Sindh at 77 per cent, whereas, the strongest support for the practice is in Balochistan and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

11 | Which culture and lifestyle issues will affect your decision to vote for a political party?

11.1 Countrywide indicators

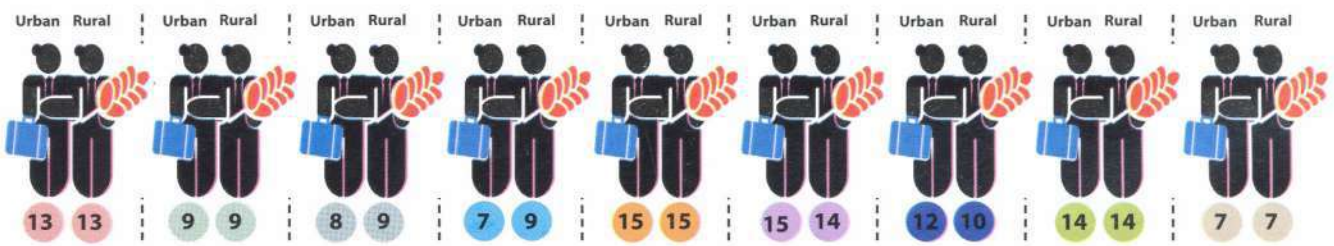
In relative terms, the greatest percentage of respondents who are against voting for such a party are found in Balochistan at 34 per cent. This may be because many Baloch see honour killing as a cultural and customary practice which is a part of their tradition. All other regions affirm that they would vote for a party which opposes honour killing.

11.2 Gender-based indicators



- Its policy on performing arts
- Its policy on sexually explicit content
- Its policy on women's participation in sports
- Its policy on women reproductive and sexual health issues
- Its policy on co-education
- Its policy on women contesting elections
- Its policy on women working with men
- Its policy on veil/niqab/hijab
- Its policy on 'dance and party' culture

11.3 Urban/rural indicators

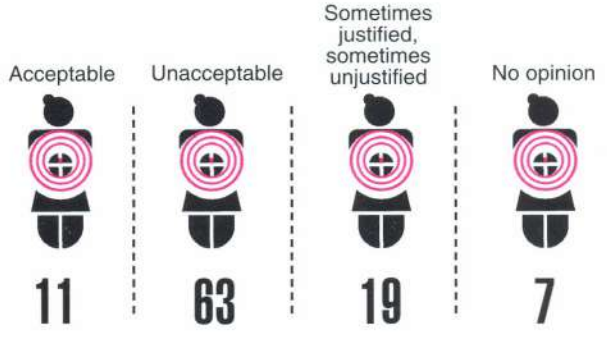


- Its policy on performing arts
- Its policy on sexually explicit content
- Its policy on women's participation in sports
- Its policy on women reproductive and sexual health issues
- Its policy on co-education
- Its policy on women contesting elections
- Its policy on women working alongside men
- Its policy on veil/niqab/hijab
- Its policy on 'dance and party' culture

"Burying women alive is the cruellest crime" reads one of the placards at a rally demanding an end to violence towards women

10 | What is your opinion on honour killings?

10.1 Countrywide indicators



10.2 Gender-based indicators

How acceptable is violence against women?

Opinions were sought on the issues of honour killing and domestic violence. A 63 per cent majority of the respondents find honour killing unacceptable. Eleven per cent accept the practice and 19 per cent find it to be occasionally justified. Over 60 per cent of all age groups and men and women find it unacceptable. Honour killing is considered unacceptable in lower Punjab at 79 per cent and Sindh at 77 per cent, whereas, the strongest support for the practice is in Balochistan and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Both rural and urban areas disapprove of it; however, the disapproval is greater in the urban areas.

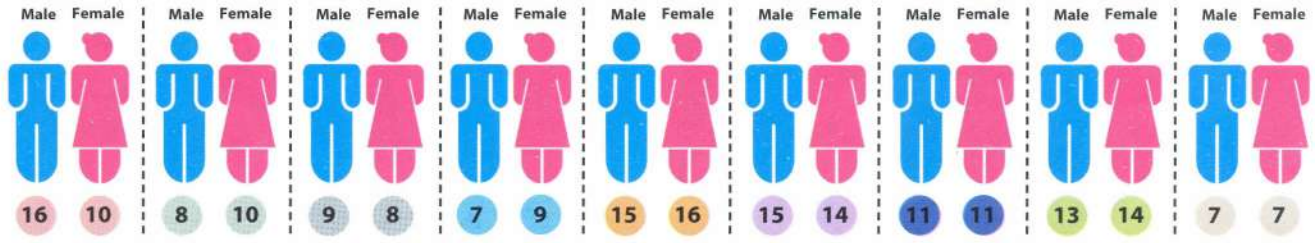
More than three-fourths of the respondents (77 per cent) find domestic violence unacceptable, while two per cent see it as acceptable. However, 16 per cent believe that it is occasionally justified. More than 70 per cent of all age groups and over 75 per cent of men and women find it unacceptable. It is most disfavoured in lower Punjab and lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Unacceptability of the practice rises

11 | Which culture and lifestyle issues will affect your decision to vote for a political party?

11.1 Countrywide indicators

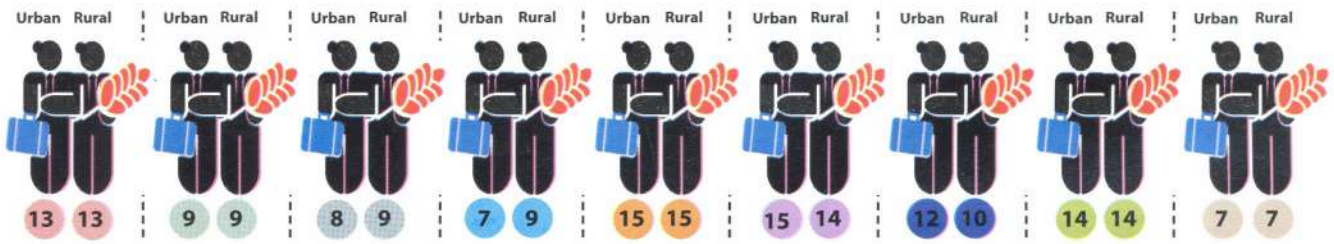
In relative terms, the greatest percentage of respondents who are against voting for such a party are found in Balochistan at 34 per cent. This may be because many Baloch see honour killing as a cultural and customary practice which is a part of their tradition. All other regions affirm that they would vote for a party which opposes honour killing.

11.2 Gender-based indicators



- Its policy on performing arts
- Its policy on sexually explicit content
- Its policy on women's participation in sports
- Its policy on women reproductive and sexual health issues
- Its policy on co-education
- Its policy on women contesting elections
- Its policy on women working with men
- Its policy on veil/niqab/hijab
- Its policy on 'dance and party' culture

11.3 Urban/rural indicators



- Its policy on performing arts
- Its policy on sexually explicit content
- Its policy on women's participation in sports
- Its policy on women reproductive and sexual health issues
- Its policy on co-education
- Its policy on women contesting elections
- Its policy on women working alongside men
- Its policy on veil/niqab/hijab
- Its policy on 'dance and party' culture

By Rubina Saigol

The republic of prejudice

With the secession of its eastern half, Pakistan has become an overwhelmingly Muslim majority country to an even greater degree than it was before 1971. What role do compatriots from religions other than Islam play in the national imagination at the present moment? More importantly, what role should such compatriots play in public life? Even within the Muslim community in Pakistan, which religious groups or sects are considered to be the 'real' Muslims? To what extent do perceptions of such issues impact people's voting behaviour? The Political Barometer marks some interesting trends and observations regarding these questions.

Over two-thirds of the respondents believe that the government should promote women's right to contest elections

with income levels and it is strongly disapproved in both rural and urban areas. The strongest opposition to domestic violence can be discerned among Seraiki-speaking, Urdu-speaking and Sindhi respondents.

When asked if they would vote for a party that is against honour killing, 63 per cent reply in the affirmative while 21 per cent say they would not. A greater percentage of men than women are willing to support such a party. In relative terms, the greatest percentage of people who are against voting for such a party are found in Balochistan at 34 per cent. This may be because many Baloch see honour killing as a cultural and customary practice which is a part of their tradition. All other regions affirm that they would vote for a party which opposes honour killing. Over 60 per cent of both urban and rural respondents would vote for such a party. Higher income and educational groups are also more likely to do this, while 37 per cent of those with no education are not willing to vote for a party that is against honour killing. The strongest support for a party opposing honour killing comes from the Punjab and the staunchest opposition from Balochistan.

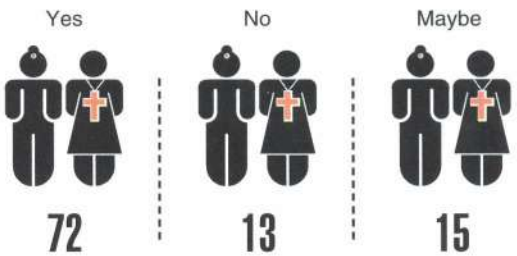
The broad trends found in the Political Barometer on women's rights and equality have been presented here and an in depth look at the results can yield a long and interesting story. On the most general level, it appears that younger and middle-aged participants are somewhat less conservative than older ones with regard to women's rights. Women generally support their own rights and equality more than men, although in some cases men also uphold these rights. While there seem to be no significant differences based on urban or rural localities, urban respondents appear to be slightly less conservative than their rural counterparts. The support for women's rights rises with income and educational levels although the support also seems high among the lowest income and educational levels. The reason for this may be that at the lowest levels of income, women's additional income is needed for survival. Therefore, there is greater support for them to work alongside men and receive an education.

Some of the anomalies are that occasionally conservative attitudes are expressed by the rising and aspiring middle class which is next to the highest income level. This class tends to adopt conservative values because of upward mobility and the enhanced capacity to keep women veiled and at home. Violence against women is generally disapproved, nevertheless close to one-fifth of the respondents suggested that honour killing and domestic violence is sometimes justified. The respondents' lack of knowledge of the law might have led to such answers but they reflect the patriarchal biases that are deeply entrenched in society despite social change.

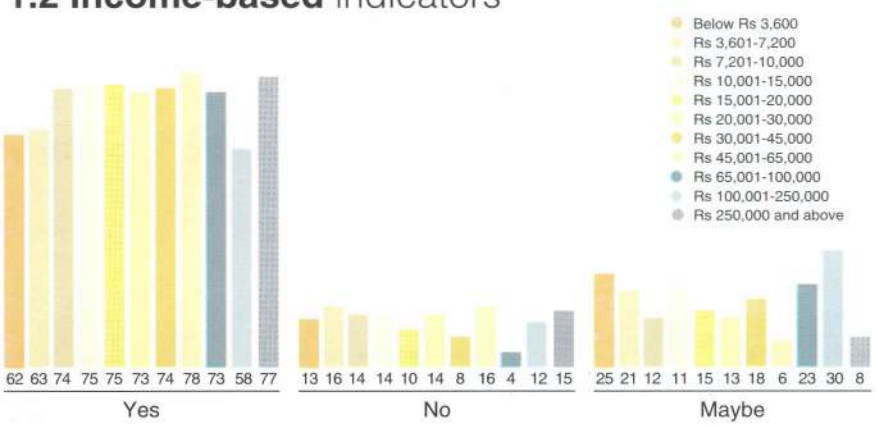
Central and upper Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seem to be the most conservative areas with regard to women's rights compared to Sindh and Balochistan — this is with the exception of honour killing which receives more support from Balochistan than other provinces. Culturally, Balochistan seems to be conservative, while socially, and in terms of abiding by religious ritual, Punjab is the most conservative province. Respondents who are Hindko-speaking, Urdu-speaking or Sindhi express generally more liberal and tolerant values as compared with Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. ■

1 Do you think non-Muslims should have rights equal to the rights of Muslims in Pakistan?

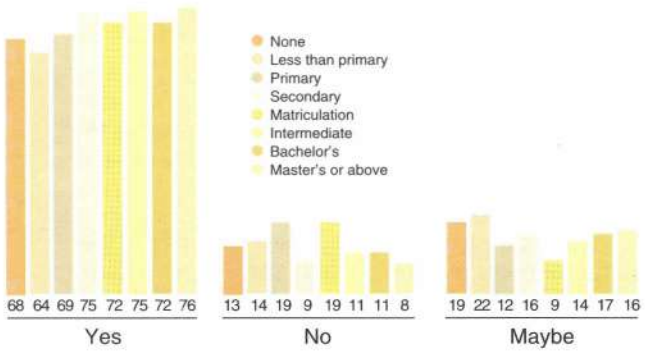
1.1 **Countrywide** indicators



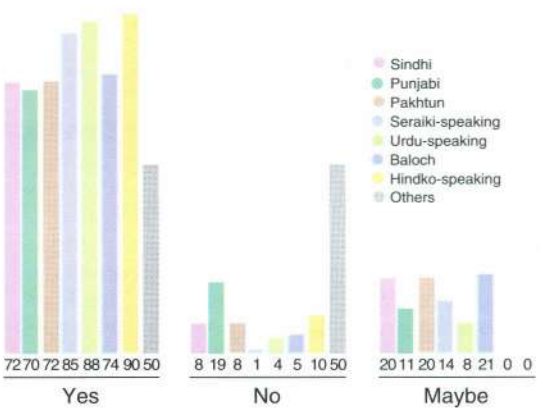
1.2 **Income-based** indicators



1.3 **Education-based** indicators

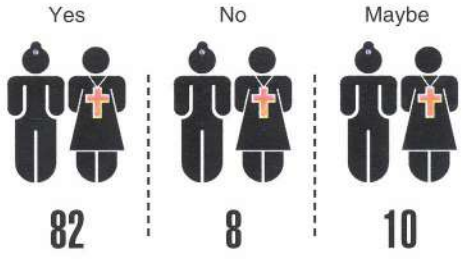


1.4 **Ethnicity-based** indicators

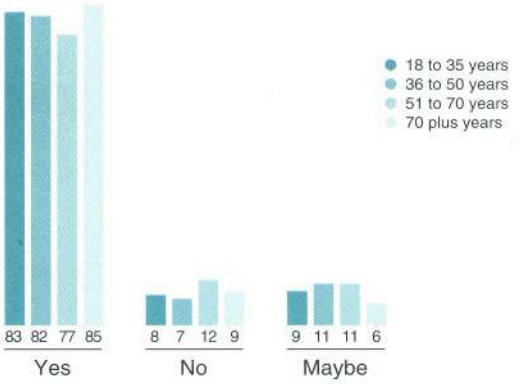


2 | Do you think non-Muslims should have freedom to practice their religion in Pakistan?

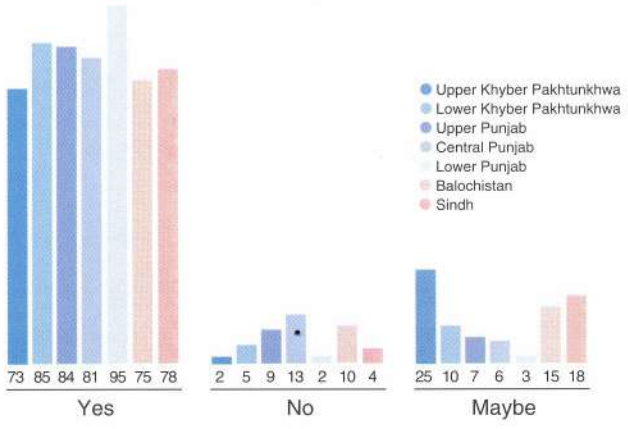
2.1 **Countrywide** indicators



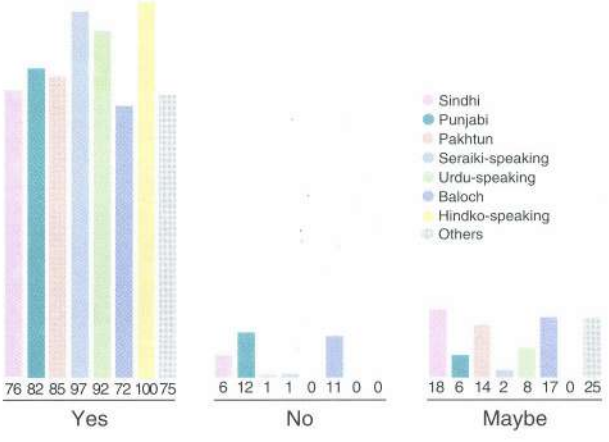
2.3 **Age-wise** indicators



2.2 **Region-based** indicators



2.4 **Ethnicity-based** indicators



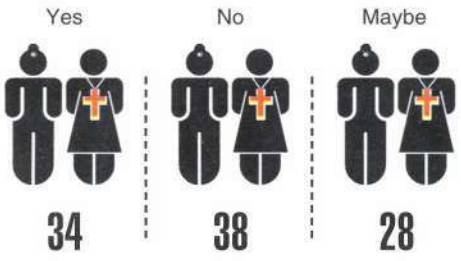
At 72.4 per cent, a majority of respondents believe that non-Muslim citizens should have equal rights in Pakistan. Strikingly, those with lower educational levels also support equality. Indeed, people of all age groups, men and women support equal rights for minorities. The strongest support appears to be among speakers of Hindko, Urdu and Seraiki.

An overwhelming 81.7 per cent support the right of religious minorities to practice their religion freely. Support exists among all age groups and is highest among older age groups. A great majority of men and women in urban and rural areas support this right. The support for this right is strongest in lower Punjab and among Hindko-speaking, Seraiki-speaking and Urdu-speaking populations.

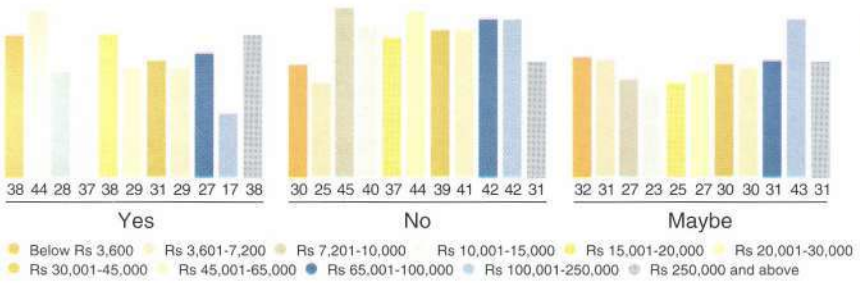
Regarding separate voters lists for minorities, there is no clear pattern as a little over one-third of the respondents support the idea (34 per cent) and roughly the same number disagree with it (38 per cent). Upper Punjab and lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

3 | Should there be a separate voters list for minorities in Pakistan?

3.1 Countrywide indicators

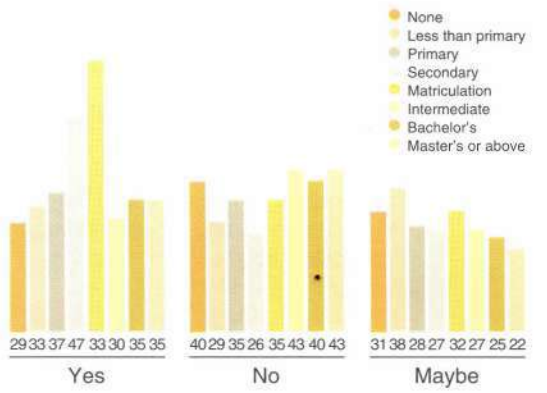


3.2 Income-based indicators

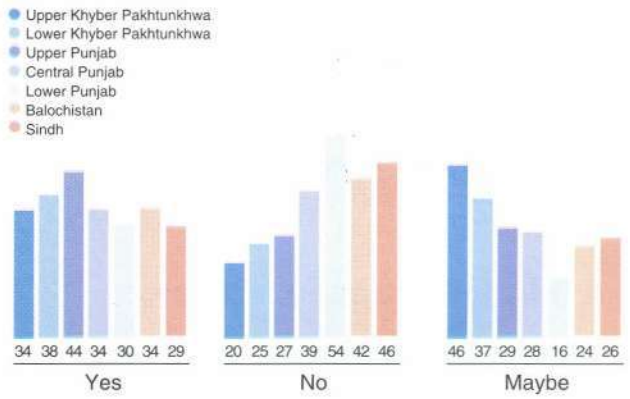


A whopping 86.6 per cent reject the idea of voting for a party that promotes a sectarian agenda. All regions, ethnicities, age groups, gender and rural and urban populations reject parties that support sectarianism. However, 45.7 per cent reply they would vote for a party that is against the Ahmadis.

3.3 Education-based indicators



3.4 Region-based indicators



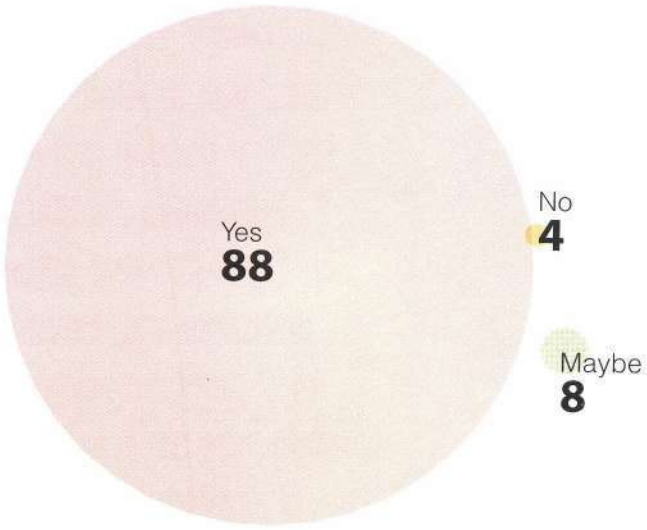
express the strongest support for separate voters list while more respondents from lower Punjab and Balochistan disagree. The results with regard to ethnicity and location are mixed and it seems that the implications of separate voters lists may not be clear to all participants.

Should blasphemy be punishable by law?

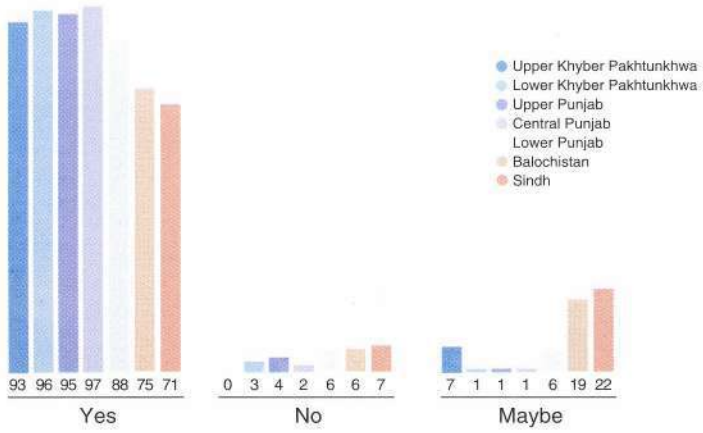
A whopping 88 per cent agree that blasphemy should be punishable by law. The strongest support for this punishment is expressed in central Punjab with 97 per cent respondents supporting it, while in Sindh there is least support at 71 per cent. Those with the lowest and highest income levels tend to disagree while the lower middle income group earning 10,000 to 30,000 rupees per month most strongly supports punishment for blasphemy. The support for punishment is high at all educational levels with matriculation being the highest. The idea also receives strong support in both urban and rural areas

4 | Do you think blasphemy should be punishable by law?

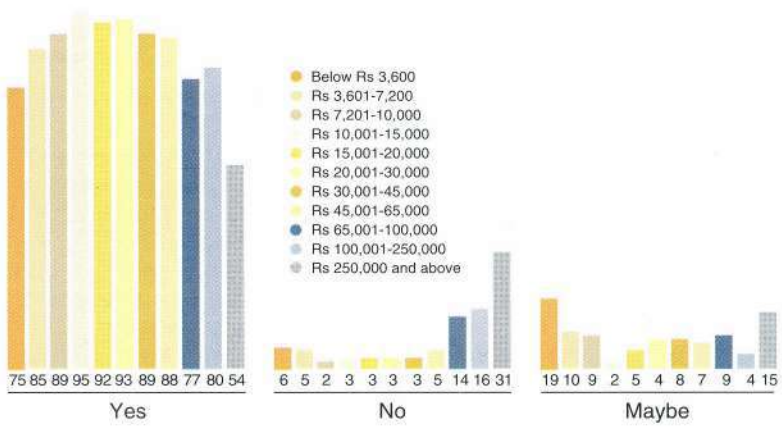
4.1 Countrywide indicators



4.2 Region-based indicators



4.3 Income-based indicators



and among all ethnic groups. However, when asked if blasphemy laws are fairly and justly applied, the trends are mixed and the same number of people agree and disagree. While respondents from both central Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are more inclined to agree that the laws are justly applied, in Balochistan, Sindh and lower Punjab more respondents disagree than agree that this is so. Urban respondents, and those at higher income and educational levels, are more inclined to disagree as are Urdu-speaking and Seraiki-speaking respondents.

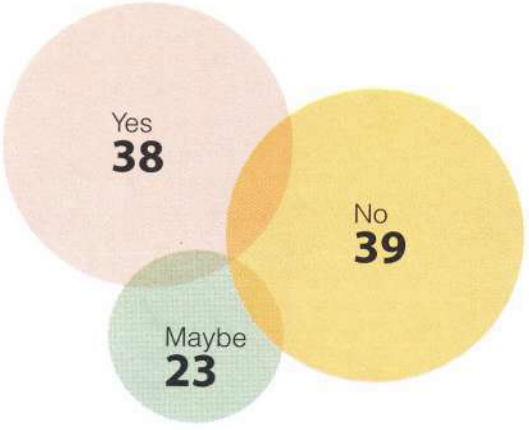
When asked if they would vote for a party that is against blasphemy laws, 56.7 per cent reply in the affirmative as compared to 33.3 per cent who reply in the negative. Over 55 per cent of all age groups express willingness to vote for a party that opposes the law. The strongest support for such a party comes from central Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sixty-two per cent of those in the highest income bracket appear willing to vote for such a political party while 45 per cent of those in the lowest income brackets would desist.

Should non-Muslim Pakistanis hold public office?

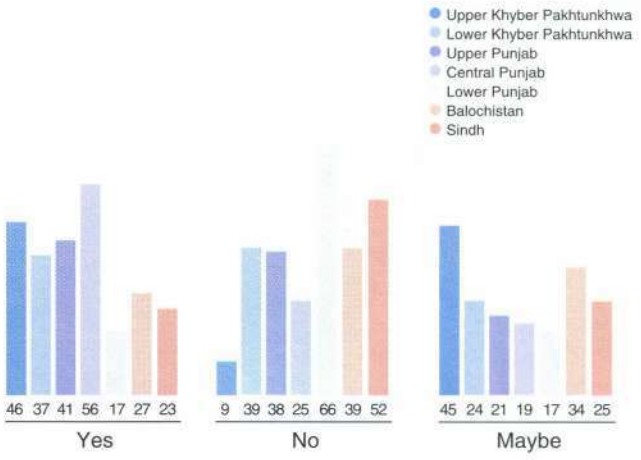
A little over 60 per cent respondents support the idea of non-Muslims holding public office. The opposition to the concept is strongest in central Punjab as compared to the other regions. While there is no significant difference between urban and rural respondents, support for the idea seems to be positively correlated with income and educational levels. The strongest support is manifested among the Hindko-speaking respondents showing 100 per cent support for non-Muslims holding public offices. The Baloch, Urdu speakers and Seraiki speakers follow in showing support. The strongest disagreement is observed among Punjabis.

5 | Do you think Pakistan's blasphemy laws are justly and fairly applied?

5.1 **Countrywide** indicators

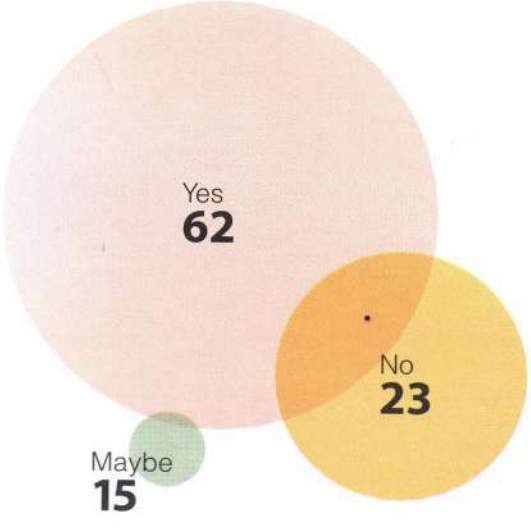


5.2 **Region-based** indicators

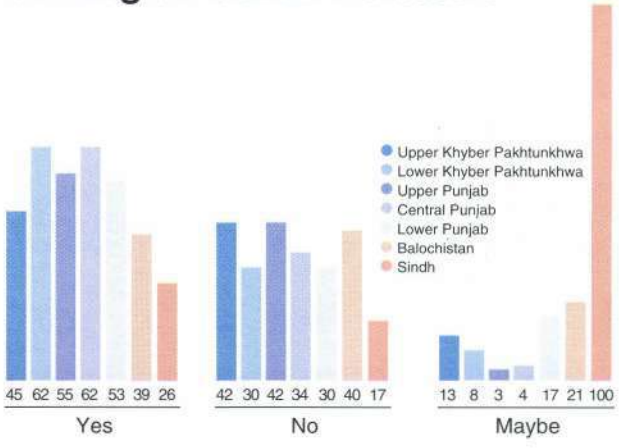


6 | Do you think non-Muslims should hold the public office?

6.1 **Countrywide** indicators



6.2 **Region-based** indicators

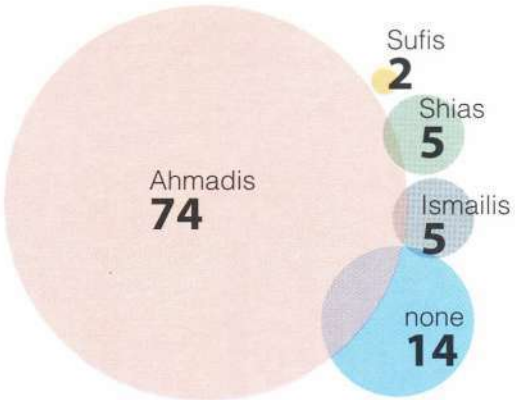


Which religious groups should not be considered as Muslim although they consider themselves as Muslim?

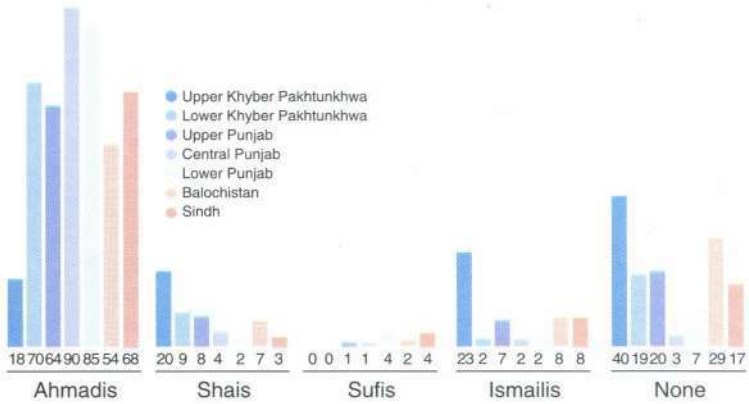
Out of a list of mentioned groups, close to three-fourths of the respondents believe the Ahmadis to be non-Muslims while around 5 per cent think Shias are not Muslims. Around 90 per cent in central Punjab and 85 per cent in lower Punjab believe that Ahmadis are non-Muslim. In upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 18 per cent respondents think that Ahmadis are non-Muslims and 20 per cent believe Shias to be non-Muslims. There are mixed results when respondents are asked if different religious groups should be allowed to practice their version of Islam. Around 46.1 per cent agree that they should be free to

7 | Which religious groups are not Muslims although they consider themselves as Muslims?

7.1 **Countrywide** indicators



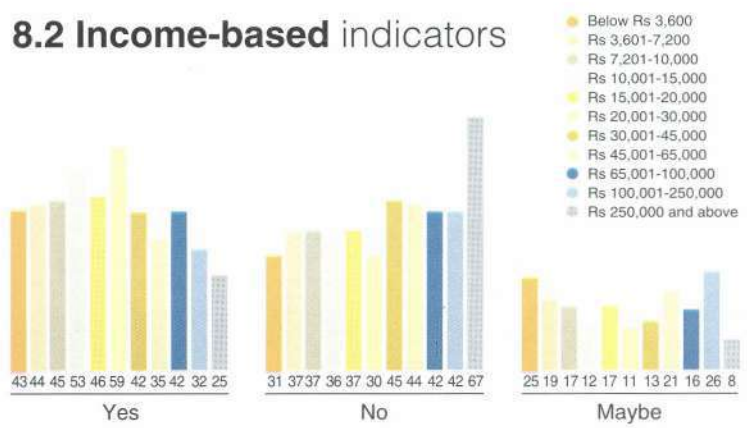
7.2 **Region-based** indicators



8 | Should they be banned from practicing their version of Islam?

8.1 **Countrywide** indicators

8.2 **Income-based** indicators



practice their faith, 36.6 per cent do not agree. There is a slightly greater likelihood of men demanding a ban on the practice of divergent faiths as compared to women. Respondents in central Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa most strongly oppose others' right to practice their version of Islam. Those with lower to middle income (20,000 to 30,000 rupees bracket) appear to be most opposed to this right, while higher educational and income levels exhibit more tolerance.

How acceptable is a party which campaigns for or against equal rights for religious or sectarian minorities?

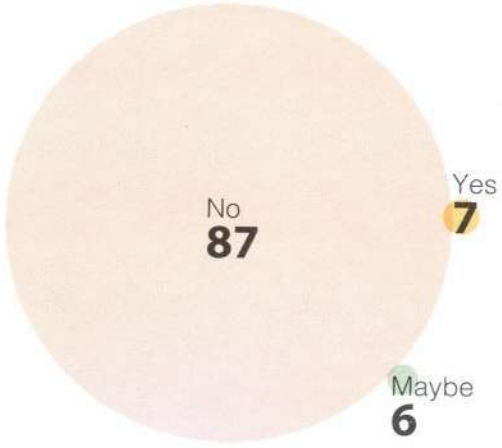
A significant 81.4 per cent would vote for a party that advocates equal rights for minorities in all spheres of life. All ethnic groups express strong support for such a party. There seem to be no significant differences with regard to the variables of age, gender, location, ethnicity and income and educational levels. A whopping 86.6 per cent reject the idea of voting for a party that promotes a sectarian agenda; this trend is visible across all regions, ethnicities, age groups, gender and rural and urban populations. However, when asked if they would vote for a party that is against the Ahmadis, 45.7 per cent reply in the affirmative. This seems to contradict the tremendous majority vote against parties who campaign on a sectarian agenda; it seems that most respondents do not perceive the anti-Ahmadi agenda as sectarian. While 63 per cent in central Punjab would vote for an anti-Ahmadi party, 64

9 | Would you vote for a party that advocates equal rights for minorities in all spheres of life, including politics?

9.1 **Countrywide** indicators

10 | Would you vote for a party that campaigns on a sectarian agenda?

10.1 **Countrywide** indicators



per cent in lower Punjab would not. The majority of Seraiki-speaking and Baloch respondents are less likely to vote for such a party, as opposed to respondents from all other ethnicities who are at least as likely, if not far more, to vote for such a party than not.

Which party will be best placed for promoting the rights of women, minorities and children?

The PPP is seen as the party most likely to promote the rights of women, minorities and children, followed by the PMLN and PTI. In Balochistan, the PPP and PTI are followed by the BNP; central Punjab favours PMLN followed by the PTI, and the PPP is a distant third. In Sindh, 50 per cent people think the PPP will prove best in promoting such issues while 11 per cent favour the MQM. People with the highest and lowest incomes favour the PPP (around 34 per cent) while 39 per cent from the second highest income bracket – of 100,000 rupees to 250,000 rupees per month – prefer the PTI. A sizeable 44 per cent in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also favour the PTI where only 14 per cent appear to believe that the ANP would be best for furthering these rights. In upper Punjab, the PMLN is seen as the best party for such issues followed by the PTI. At 36 per cent, those earning around 20,000 to 30,000 rupees a month are the foremost in perceiving the PMLN as the party most likely to support these rights. A majority of rural respondents favour the PPP while the urban ones are inclined to support the PTI. People with secondary-level education prefer the PMLN while those with the highest educational levels prefer the PTI. There is insignificant support for the religious parties among all age groups, ethnic groups, genders, regions and educational and income levels.

The results can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways. Restricting the analysis to some broad observations, it seems that most people support the rights of religious minorities but there is confusion when it comes to the specific questions of the blasphemy laws and Ahmadis. Central Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa appear to be the least supportive regions generally with regards to minorities' rights, while Sindh, southern Punjab and Balochistan express greater support in this respect.

Income levels and educational attainment are positively correlated with higher levels of religious tolerance and liberal values, but there are some anomalies where the rising upper middle classes express deep conservatism. The most conservative group is the lower middle class where people earn around 30,000 rupees per month. There is little support for religious parties, which are by definition viewed as sectarian — a sentiment strongly rejected by respondents. Potential voters from rural areas and those with lower earnings favour the PPP as a supporter of the rights of women, children and minorities while urban, well-educated voters prefer the PTI. The conservative lower middle and middle classes in urban areas seem to favour the PMLN in this regard. Punjab – where the anti-Ahmadi riots took place in the 1950s – seems to be the least sympathetic to the community. ■