

IRI INDEX II: Parliamentary Elections

Interest in politics and the upcoming elections remains high. A large majority of Pakistanis say that they will vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Asking about the upcoming elections, IRI's survey indicates that there is a high degree of interest in the upcoming elections, with 82 percent saying that they intended to vote:

“If the elections for the national assembly were held next week, how likely is it that you would vote?”

Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely At All	DK/NR
55.8%	26.2%	5.4%	5.1%	7.5%

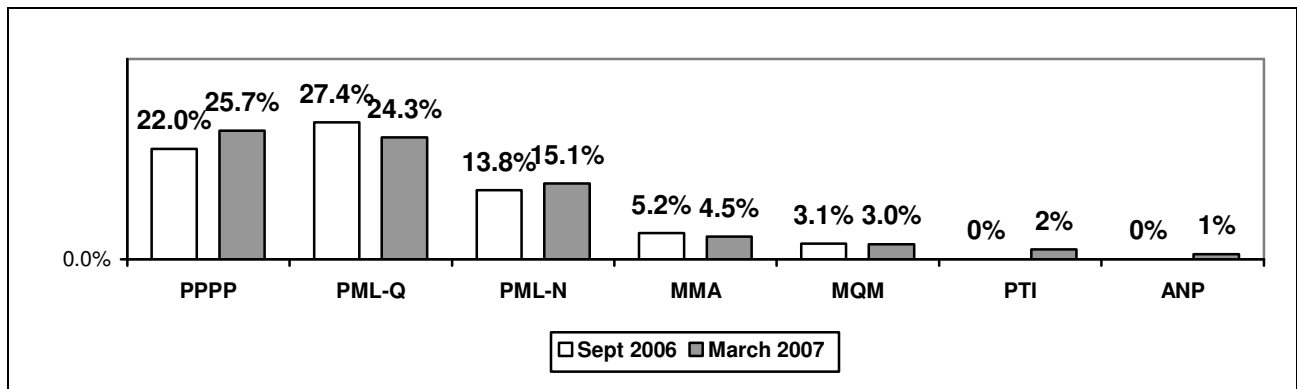
Of the reasons cited by those who were not planning on voting as to why that was the case, the most frequent reason given was that there was no point in doing so:

“If not very likely or not likely at all, why wouldn't you vote?”

No use casting vote	36.4%
Will be out of town	2.3%
Situation is not good	1%
No ID card	16.9%
Not allowed to cast vote by free will	5%
Not on voters list	1.1%
Other	6.2%

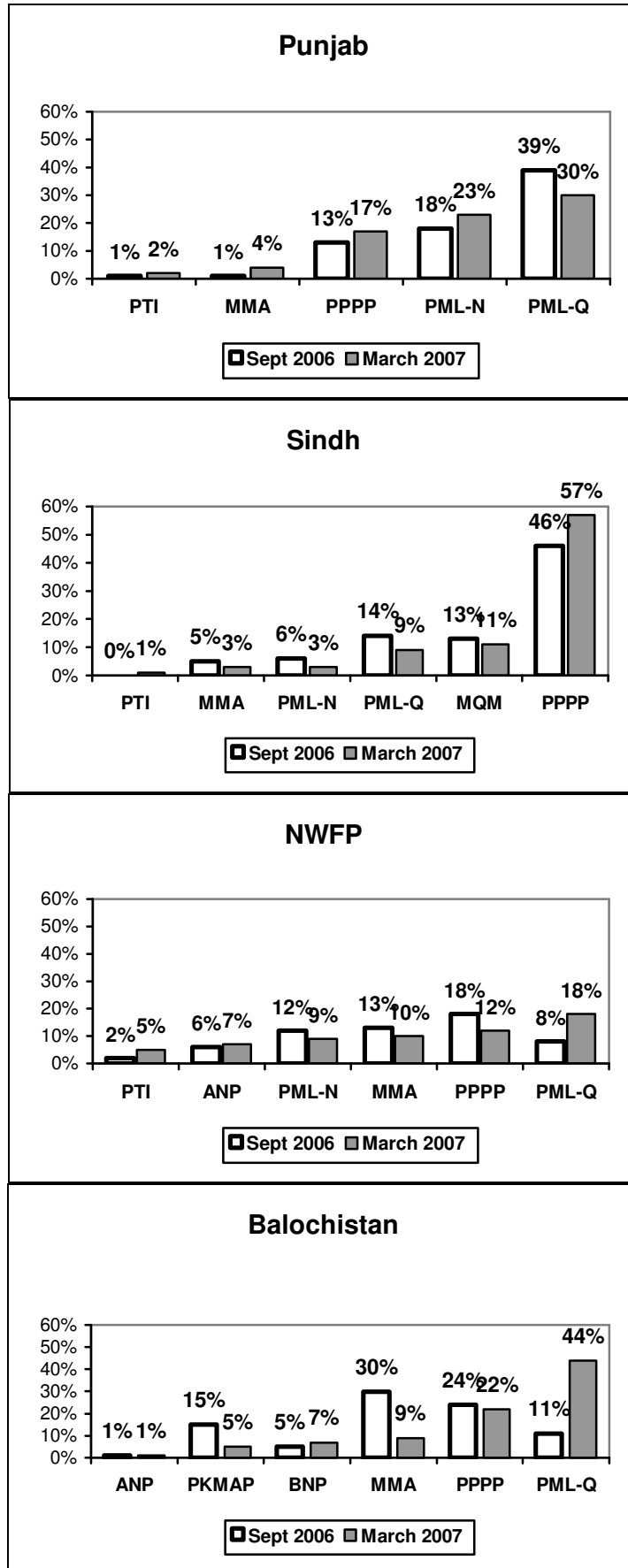
When asked which party they would vote for, PPPP narrowly led the field with 25.7 percent, a nearly four percent up-tick from the 22 percent the PPPP garnered in IRI's September 2006 poll. PML-Q was a close second with 24.3 percent, down three percent from previous polling. PML-N came in third with 15.1 percent, up from 13.8 percent. In a breakdown by province, PML-Q led in Balochistan, NWFP, and Punjab, while PPPP led in Sindh. In Punjab, the largest of Pakistan's provinces containing the majority of the population and considered to be PML-Q's base of support, the party was down 8.6 percent, while PML-N and PPPP were up 4.7 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively.

“If the elections for the national assembly were held next week for which party would you vote?”



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Along with a high interest in the upcoming elections, the numbers above also show that the vast majority of Pakistanis have settled on a choice of party, with nearly 80 percent declaring their preference. IRI’s polling also shows that of those stating a preference, nearly 70 percent say that they are going to definitely support that party:

“How likely is it that you will vote for this party?”

Will Definitely Support This Party	68.3%
Will Probably Support This Party	9%
DK / NR	22.7%

IRI’s poll shows that this trend is true for all of the parties, with a high percentage of each party’s voters saying that will stick with this choice. PPPP, PML-N, and MMA voters showed the highest degree of party loyalty:

	PPPP	PML-N	MMA	ANP	PML-Q	PTI	PKMAP	MQM
Will Definitely Support	89.2%	88.7%	88.7%	87.9%	84.1%	80.0%	76.4%	75.9%
Will Probably Support	8.1%	7.3%	7.3%	4.8%	12.2%	10.9%	16.8%	20.5%
DK/NR	2.3%	4.0%	4.0%	7.2%	3.8%	9.2%	6.8%	3.6%

IRI’s poll also probed voter support for potential party coalitions. When asked if JUI and JI should keep their MMA coalition, voters were split both nationally and in NWFP and Balochistan, the two provinces where MMA is strongest. However, the vast majority of voters who identified themselves as MMA supporters want the coalition to continue:

“Should JUI and JI keep their alliance and contest the election as MMA?”

	National	NWFP	Balochistan	MMA Voters
Yes	33.9%	35.0%	30.9%	81.2%
No	30.8%	24.5%	33.9%	7.5%
DK/NR	35.3%	40.5%	35.1%	11.4%

Voters were also split on whether or not the PML-Q/MQM partnership should remain intact. And while MQM voters supported the alliance continuing by a large number, PML-Q voters did so at a much lower percentage:

“Should PML-Q and MQM keep their governing alliance?”

	National	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	PML-Q Voters	MQM Voters
Yes	30.2%	32.2%	31.1%	19.8%	30.8%	46.6%	71.8%
No	31.8%	30.3%	35.4%	31.3%	34.0%	27.3%	12.0%
DK/NR	38%	37.5%	33.5%	48.8%	35.1%	26.1%	16.2%

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IRI's poll also found that by a large margin, voters preferred PML-N to form a coalition with PPPP as opposed to MMA. A coalition between PPPP and PML-N was also preferred by a plurality of PML-N voters:

“Would you rather see PML-N form a coalition with MMA or PPPP?”

	National	PML-N Voters
PPPP	41.4%	45.5%
MMA	14.1%	23.7%
DK/NR	44.4%	30.8%

It was a constant theme throughout IRI's poll, voters prefer cooperation and joint-effort between parties with a commonality of purpose. For example, large percentages want the Baloch and Pashtoon nationalist parties to work together, especially in NWFP and Balochistan, where these two ethnicities are prevalent:

“Should the Baloch and Pashtoon nationalist parties form a coalition to work for provincial autonomy?”

	NWFP	Balochistan
Yes	44.1%	79.2%
No	18.6%	8.3%
DK/NR	37.3%	12.5%

Along the same lines, voters would also prefer a wider coalition between PPPP and the nationalist parties:

“Would you support a coalition between PPPP and the nationalist parties?”

Yes	37.6%
No	28.1%
DK / NR	34.2%

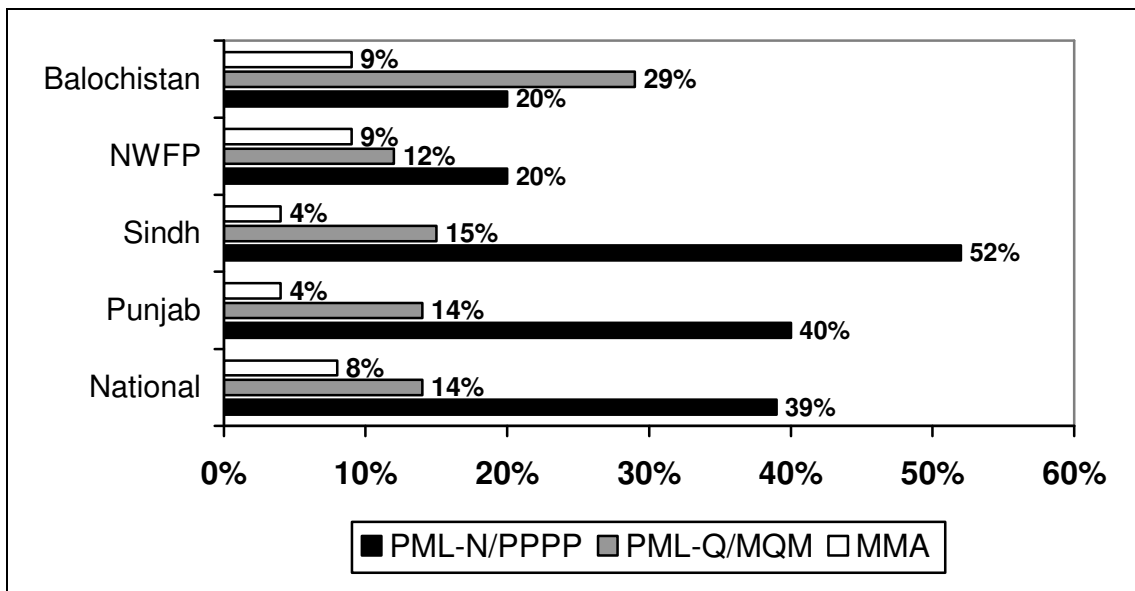
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Finally, when asked about a hypothetical election match-up between coalitions of PPPP/PML-N, PML-Q/MQM, and MMA, voters overwhelmingly chose a PPPP/PML-N coalition. The PPPP/PML-N coalition also would sweep all of the provinces except for Balochistan, beating PML-Q/MQM handily even in Punjab. Even a significant number of PML-Q voters would find the PPPP/PML-N coalition attractive:

“If the elections were held next week and the following parties formed coalitions, which of these coalitions would you vote for?”

	National	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	PML-Q Voters
PML-N/PPPP	38.9%	39.6%	52.3%	20.4%	19.5%	28.4%
PML-Q/MQM	14.4%	13.5%	14.9%	11.6%	29.1%	36.5%
MMA	8.4%	10.3%	3.5%	8.7%	9.4%	5.5%
Other	3.2%	1.8%	6.2%	1.3%	8.9%	2.4%
DK/NR	35.2%	34.9%	23.1%	57.9%	33.1%	27.2%



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