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An analysis of students' attitude toward electoral politics in 2018 general elections: A case Study of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to investigate educated youth's attitudes toward electoral politics in general, and the 2018 general elections, in particular. For this purpose, the researchers conducted a case study of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (QAU). One of the major objectives of this study was to ascertain educated youth's general attitude toward electoral politics and know whether there exist any variations in the thinking of students with diverse ethnic, social, and academic backgrounds. The author also wanted to find possible explanations for any such variations. Therefore, the paper first presents overall findings of the study and then analyses the responses on the basis of respondents' gender, their disciplines, and ethnic identity. For better results, the researchers used mixed research method. He first collected quantitative data through a survey and then interviewed different people to find possible explanations for the findings. The study found that there are great variations in the thinking of students belonging to different provinces/administrative units, academic disciplines, and genders. The findings necessitate comprehensive reforms in the electoral system.

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1.   Introduction

Voting behaviour occupies a central place in the study of electoral politics. It is one of the subfields of Political Science and the main form of political participation in democratic systems. The study of voting behaviour focuses on the determinants of why people vote the way they do and how do they reach at the decision they ultimately make. As far as voting patterns are concerned, sociologists tend to focus on social and economic factors observing correlations between ethnicity, class, age, gender, occupation and vote. On the other hand, political scientists' focus remains on the influence of political elements like electoral campaigns, political programs, issues and the popularity of leaders of a party. However, both disciplines share much and frequently overlap in their investigative approaches (Scott & Marshall, 2009). This overlap between the two disciplines is known as political sociology.

Despite the fact that elections played an important role in the creation of Pakistan and that all subsequent elections were either preceded or succeeded by important events like break-up of the country, take over by military dictators (Wilder, 1999), execution of the country's first elected prime minister (Chandio & Chandio, 2013), dismissal of elected governments before completion of their terms, exclusion of former prime ministers from the electoral process (Farmanullah, 2014), the emergence of MMA-grand alliance of religious parties across sectarian divide (Khan, 2011), and formation of a coalition government by two arch-rival political parties--- Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) which ultimately forced a military dictator to resign (Shah, 2018; Swaine, 2008), this branch of political science has not attracted due attention from scholars and students in Pakistan.

According to Muhammad Waseem, electoral malpractices, army's dominant role which has damaged Pakistan's reputation as electoral democracy, the fact that relatively few elections have been held, decline of social sciences in Pakistan and the variety of legal and constitutional systems under which elections were held, which led to scepticism about elections' usefulness and legitimacy, are the main factors for little interest among students and scholars in electoral politics (Waseem, 1994). However, now we have a good number of researchers investigating electoral behaviour in Pakistan.

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: There exist great variations in the opinions that educated youth from various ethnicities hold about dynamics of electoral politics of Pakistan.
H2: There is a wide gap between social and natural sciences students' opinions about electoral politics in the country.
H3: There is a huge difference in the perceptions of educated males and females about electoral politics of Pakistan.

This paper is also an attempt in this direction. Voting behaviour is a complex phenomenon with social, ethnic, and academic backgrounds of voters exerting deep influence on their decision making process. It was in this context that this researchers decided to explore educated youth's attitude toward electoral politics with special focus on variations in thinking of educated people with diverse ethnic, social, and academic backgrounds. The findings of this study supported this researcher's hypothesis that there exist huge differences in the attitude of educated youth from diverse academic, social, and ethnic backgrounds toward electoral politics.

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2.   Literature review

As stated above, the scholars and researchers in Pakistan have not paid enough attention to the study of electoral politics and voting behaviour. However, now we have many researchers with keen interest in the scientific study of voting behaviour. These scholars and researchers have presented different explanations for voting patterns in Pakistan. Ahmad (1977) and Alavi (1971) explain voting behaviour in terms of class relations. They argue that the voting behaviour of economically dependent voters is mainly shaped by the choice of their employers. Economically dependent voters, they argue, cannot take into account their caste or other considerations while making voting decisions. Mohammad Waseem, in his two works on 1993 and 2002 general elections, has discussed the colonial bureaucratic legacy and its impact on post-independence politics.

Andrew R. Wilder's book "The Pakistani Voter: Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour in the Punjab" (1999) is another good addition to the material on voting behaviour in Pakistan. While discussing both pre and post-independence electoral politics in Pakistan, he explains as to how focus of electoral studies in South Asia shifted from social to political determinants. Shandana Khan Mohmand's "Patrons, brothers and landlords: Competing for the vote in rural Pakistan" (2011) is another good work on voting behaviour in Pakistan. It is based on her fieldwork in Sargodha district of Punjab. She has conducted a comparative study of voting patterns in different types of villages of the district.

Kanwal *et al.*, (2016), in their detailed study of voting behaviour of educated youth in Punjab's Multan city have tried to determine the impact of religion, ethnicity, candidate personality, party leader, local and national issues, and manifesto on voting behaviour in the 2013 elections. The paper also tries to highlight the influence of Imran Khan's personality on the youth. Interestingly, these authors, like the paper at hand, also found educated youth to be less inclined to vote for religious parties and a comparatively high percentage of them preferred voting for parties on the basis of their stance on national issues.

Earlier, the focus of electoral studies was mainly on Punjab. Recently voting patterns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other areas have also attracted a good number of researchers. Ahmad (2010), Farmanullah (2014) and Shah (2019) did their PhD research on different aspects of voting behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A positive aspect of their research is that they have also employed theoretical frameworks for their studies. Similarly, Farmanullah and Jan (2016) in their study of voting behaviour in a single NA constituency in Peshawar (NA-2) in 2008 elections concluded that party identification does not play a key role in shaping voting behaviour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Farmanullah & Jan, 2016). Contrary to their findings, Badshah *et al.* (2018) in their study of political determinants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2002, 2008, and 2013 elections found party identification to be the most important factor among political determinants. Furthermore, they, like this researcher, also found that Imran Khan's personality played an important role in attracting voters in the 2013 elections.

Farmanullah and Islam (2019) in their study of a Peshawar-based constituency during 2002, 2008, and 2013 general elections found that issues highlighted by political parties played a crucial role in shaping voting behaviour in these elections. Shah *et al.* (2019) have in their paper tried to ascertain the role of candidates' personality, economic and political clout as well as participation in socio-cultural events in their constituencies on voting behaviour. Ram *et al.* (2018) in their study have tried to ascertain youth's perceptions about issues like role of ECP

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in holding elections, participation in electoral process (polling votes), and transparency of electoral process. Interestingly, they found that more than half of the respondents did not think the electoral process to be free and fair. This author also found that a high percentage of youth did not consider the electoral process to be transparent.

3.   Theoretical framework

The scientific study of voting behaviour is explained through three major theoretical approaches or models (Antunes, 2010) having origins in the disciplines of sociology, psychology and economics, respectively (Visser, 1998).

3.1.   Sociological model

Sociological model, also known as School of Columbia (Antwi, 2018), focuses on the voter and the social structure around him/her (Scott & Marshall, 2009) and argues that voting decisions are determined by social forces (Visser, 1994). Thus, it places vote in social context and then studies the effects of variables such as social class, religion, nationalism, language, and rural-urban divisions (Scott & Marshall, 2009). According to this theory, the individual learns his/her partisan penchant conforming to the political alignments of the group to which he/she belongs (Aiba, 2002). It argues that, family has a deep influence on children's political socialization and their affiliation with a specific party (Dinas, 2017) as values and norms acquired in the early phase of life exert lifelong influence (Sharlamanov & Jovanoski, 2014). Sociological model claims that active members (opinion makers) within a social group interpose between the members of the social group and the media content to spread the media messages among the less active group members in a way congenial to the political standards of the group members and thus political parties and candidates have little chance to change voters' attitudes in their favour (Visser, 1994).

3.2.   Psychosocial model

The psychosocial model also called School of Michigan emerged (Antunes, 2010) as a reaction and criticism to the sociological mode (Visser, 1994). This model links voting decisions with psychological predispositions of voters like their party identifications and attitudes towards the candidates etc. (Scott & Marshall, 2009). It states that there are six psychological elements including candidate orientation, issue orientation, partisanship/party identification, sense of civic obligation, conformity to the group standards, and sense of efficacy may influence decisions of voters. Among them, the first three are thought to be the most important (Aiba, 2003). Party identification means voters' psychological attachment with a specific political party. Issue orientation means voters' attitude toward issues highlighted during an election campaign while candidate orientation means voters' attitudes toward personal qualities and performance of a particular candidate. This model does recognize the role of social determinants but argues that it takes a long time for social characteristics among voters to change while voting patterns change in a very short time between two elections. Thus, this change in voters' behaviour within such a short time cannot be attributed to social factors, which almost remain unchanged during the same period (Akhter & Sheikh, 2014).

3.3.   Rational choice model

The third and last model is the rational-choice model. It seeks to explain voting behaviour in
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economic terms (Antunes, 2010) and considers voting behaviour as the result of cost-benefit analysis on the part of voters (Scott & Marshall, 2009). This model argues that if working of the market can be explained with rational choice assumptions then why not a political system. This model creates an analogy between voters and consumers on the one hand while between political parties and business enterprises, on the other hand. The model maintains that voters, like customers who seek to maximize utility, want to maximize their votes' utility while political parties, like enterprises who want to maximize their profits, want to maximize their gains from elections (Antunes, 2010). It presents the argument that voters evaluate contesting candidates and their parties and then vote for parties on the basis of their claims to deliver (Stegmaier *et al.*, 2017). Thus, voters keep in mind their own interests while deciding to vote for a party or candidate and these interests may be of personal nature or related to family, class, or group etc. (Dowding, 2018).

4.   Research methodology

4.1.   Mixed method

The researchers have used a mixed research methodology which allows a researcher to combine elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches for the purpose of comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon and corroboration (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). This allows a researcher freedom to analyze quantitative and qualitative data independently or dependently by letting the interview questions depend upon the outcomes of the analysis of the questionnaire data (and vice versa) (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). This researcher too based their interview and focus group discussion questions on the findings of quantitative data. For quantitative data collection, the researchers used a survey questionnaire, which consisted of eight questions[1] with each question having multiple options. The survey was conducted between July 1 and July 15, 2018, immediately before the 2018 general elections. For qualitative data, the researchers also conducted interviews, focus group discussions and informal conversations with students of different ethnic and academic backgrounds.

4.2.   Population

As all students of QAU[2] Islamabad happened to be at least 18 years old at the time of this survey, so the universe of this study included all registered students of QAU. At the time of this survey, there were 9327 registered students at the university.

4.3.   Sample size

Maximum possible accurate results being the target, the researchers decided to keep a big sample size. Therefore, he distributed 500 questionnaires. However, not all questionnaires were returned, and the final sample ultimately considered for this study was 425.

4.4.   Sampling method

The administration of the concerned university was unwilling to provide names and other details of individual students, instead it just provided province/administrative unit-wise list of students enrolled in various programs. Therefore, the researchers could not use probability sampling for the survey and instead opted for non-probability quota sampling. For this purpose, the researchers divided total questionnaires among the four provinces and two administrative

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units i.e., erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (erstwhile FATA) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in proportion to their respective numbers of students in the university. Share of each province/unit was further divided on the basis of academic level (PhD, M. Phil, MSc, and BS), subject/discipline (social sciences/ other than social sciences) and gender. As students with different social, ethnic, sectarian, economic, and political backgrounds from within each province study in this university, care was also taken to include students from all parts of each province/administrative unit to make the survey as much representative as possible.

As the university enrols students on quota basis and allocates separate admission quotas to Sindh Urban and Sindh Rural, the researchers also treated the two as separate units (however, Sindh Urban was not considered for the province-wise analysis due to its insignificant share in the total sample). On the other hand, FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan were treated as one unit because of the allocation of a joint admission quota to them by the university. Though erstwhile FATA had become part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) by the time the survey was conducted, still the researchers treated it as separate from KP because all the students from erstwhile FATA registered at the university at that time were those who had been enrolled when erstwhile FATA had not been merged with KP.

5.   Discussion and findings

Keeping in view the diverse social, political, ethnic, sectarian, and academic backgrounds of the students at the university, the researchers has conducted multi-level analysis of the survey results. In this regard, the author first analyzed overall responses to each question followed by academic-wise, gender-wise, and province-wise analysis of the findings. The purpose of multi-level analysis was to ascertain whether students' ethnic and academic backgrounds and genders have any impact on their opinions with regard to electoral politics.

Out of 425 respondents, 401 had mentioned their disciplines, which means the sample size for this level of analysis consists of 401 respondents (rather than 425) with 187 from social sciences and 214 from natural and physical sciences. For the gender-based analysis, 404 questionnaires (226 male and 178 female) were valid as 21 respondents did not mention their gender. Out of 425 respondents in the survey, 418 had indicated their domiciles. Therefore, the province-wise level of analysis is based on the results of 418 questionnaires.

The first question asked by the researchers was about respondents' opinions whether Pakistan's problems can be solved through electoral politics/parliament. Out of 425 respondents, 35.10% said they strongly believe that electoral politics/parliament can resolve Pakistan's issues while only 9.40% expressed strong disagreement with this supposition. Majority of the respondents (48.70%) said they agree with this assumption to some extent while 6.80% said they have no opinion about the question. Overall, students' attitude toward parliamentary politics can be interpreted as positive as 35% expressed strong confidence in its capabilities while just 9% expressed strong disbelief in parliament's capabilities to address the country's challenges. The fact that 48% said they agree with the argument to some extent can also be taken as positive as at least they have some level of trust in electoral politics. Keeping in view the fledgling democracy and constant media tirade against politicians, political parties, and civilian governments portraying them as corrupt and inefficient, the above results should be considered as more than encouraging.

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Table-1: To what extent do you agree that Pakistan's problems can be solved through electoral
politics/parliament?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	149	35.10	35.10
Strongly disagree	40	9.40	44.5
Agree to some extent	207	48.70	93.2
Do not know	29	6.80	100
Total	425	100	

In the academic-wise breakdown of the responses, 45.45% of Social Sciences Respondents (SSRs) said they strongly agree, 43.31% said they agree to some extent, 8.02% said they strongly disagree while 3.20% opted for the "do not know" option. Among the Natural Sciences Respondents (NSRs), 26.16% said they strongly agree, 52.80% said they agree to some extent, 11.21% said they strongly disagree while 9.81% said they do not know. The most striking difference in attitudes of social and natural sciences students toward electoral politics is shown in the difference in their respective percentages showing strong agreement with the supposition that parliament can address Pakistan's problems. More than 45% of SSRs expressed strong agreement as compared to only 26.16% of NSRs. While commenting on the difference in the opinion of SSRs and NSRs, an independent researcher attributed this difference to the fact that social sciences students study books containing information about successful functioning of electoral politics in other countries while majority of natural sciences students have knowledge only about Pakistan's electoral politics, which has so far not been much successful and thus they express their doubts about its potentials to solve Pakistan's problems.

Among male respondents (MRs), 43.80% said they strongly agree, 38.93% said they agree to some extent, 11.50% said they strongly disagree, while 5.30% opted for the "do not know" option. Among the female respondents (FRs), only 24.71% said they strongly agree, 60.11% said they agree to some extent, 6.74% said they strongly disagree while 8.42% opted for the "do not know" option. Here, the major difference emerged in the percentages of the two groups with regard to complete trust in parliament/electoral politics as a much lower percentage of FRs (24.71%) expressed strong agreement with the idea as compared to 43.80% among MRs. However, the fact that more than 60 percent of FRs said they agreed to some extent is also a positive indicator of trust in parliament/electoral politics. Responding to a question about this difference in trust level among MRs and FRs in electoral politics, a female student of the university said that usually females go for short term solutions approach, so this lack of trust in parliamentary politics among females should be looked at from this perspective as well.

In the province-wise analysis, more than half (51.85%) of the respondents from Balochistan marked the option of strongly agree, 33.33% of agree to some extent while only 14.81% of strongly disagree. From Sindh Rural, 26.31% respondents said they strongly agree, 68.42% said they agree to some extent, while only 5.26% marked the strongly disagree option. Among the respondents from FATA/GB, the options of strongly agree and agree to some extent were mentioned by 37.5% each, 6.25% mentioned the strongly disagree option while 18.75% respondents marked the do not know option. In the case of AJK, 44.45% respondents said they strongly agree while 55.55% said they agree to some extent. Among respondents from KP, 43.47% said they strongly agree, 41.30% said they agree to some extent, 10.86% said they strongly disagree while 4.34% opted for the do not know option. In the case of Punjab, 28.88% of the respondents expressed their strong agreement, 52.44% agreement to some extent, 10.22% strong disagreement while 8.44% said they do not know. Balochistan emerged with

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the highest level of trust in parliamentary politics while respondents from Punjab expressed the lowest level of confidence in parliament/electoral politics.

The second question was about the possibility of holding free and fair elections. Only 7.30% of the total respondents said the elections will be completely free and fair while 30.80% said the elections will not be free and fair at all. More than half of the respondents (55.55%) said that the elections will be free and fair to some extent only while 6.35% said they have no idea in this regard. The fact that only 7.3% respondents expressed full confidence in the fairness of the electoral process reflects educated youth's misgivings about the fairness of electoral process. For example, a university graduate who recently completed her PhD in social sciences said that the educated class's distrust in the electoral process has reached such a level that now many educated voters do not cast their votes on the ground that their votes will not make any difference. During his interactions and discussions with the youth in the university, the researchers noticed that this lack of trust in the electoral process' transparency seems to be the result of past experiences of interference in election process and rigging allegations by the losing political parties. The fact that losing parties after every election level rigging allegations has also played a role in strengthening the perception that every election is rigged.

Table-2: Do you think that the upcoming elections will be free and fair?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely free and fair	31	7.30	7.30
Free and fair to some extent	236	55.55	62.85
Not at all	131	30.80	93.65
Don't know	27	6.35	100
Total	425	100.0	

However, some people take the concerns of these respondents seriously and claim that the concerns of these respondents were to some extent vindicated by the video clips on social media showing security personnel's exchange of harsh words and in some cases even scuffles with poling agents and workers of political parties and the sudden collapse of Result Transmission System (RTS) resulting in delay in declaration of results. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) Pakistan 2018 also recorded some concerns about the transparency of the election process. In its final report, it reported incidents of army personnel's interference in the polling process or expulsion of polling agents from polling stations. It noted that "the count, transmission and tabulation of results lacked transparency leaving room for allegations of electoral malpractices" (EU EOM 2018, P. 6). The EU EOM (2018) further observed that though the Elections Act 2017 empowered Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to allow any citizen observer group or international observer organization to observe the electoral process, give them access to polling stations, the count of votes and the consolidation of results, in practice, it was at the discretion of army personnel inside the polling stations to determine for how long observers could remain inside. The mission complained that the ECP did not provide observers and journalists an unimpeded access to critical stages of the pre- and post-election day periods, including recounts.

Among the SSRs, 7.48% said the elections will be completely free and fair, 37.43% said the elections will not be free and fair at all, 50.26% said they will be free and fair to some extent while 4.81% opted for the do not know option. Among NSRs, 6.07% said the elections will be completely free and fair, 24.29% said they will not be free and fair at all, 60.74% said they will be free and fair to some extent while 8.41% opted for do not know option while one respondent

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did not mark any of the options. Though an equal percentage of respondents from both groups mentioned the "completely free and fair" option, there was still a big difference in their perceptions when it came to the option of "not at all" as 37.43% SSR respondents said the elections will not be free and fair at all as compared to just 24.29% among NSR. A clear majority of both SSR (50.26%) and NSR (60.74%) believed the election will be free and fair to some extent.

In the gender-based analysis, 7.96% of the MRs said that elections will be completely free and fair, 39.38% said they will not be free and fair at all, 48.23% said the elections will be free and fair to some extent while 4.42% said they do not know. Among FRs, only 6.74% said the elections will be completely free and fair, 20.22% said they will not be free and fair at all, 63.48% said they will be free and fair to some extent, 8.98% said they don't know while one respondent (0.56%) did not mark any of the given options. The major difference in the responses to this question emerged in the percentages opting for the option of 'not at all' free and fair as twice the percentage of MRs (39.38%) mentioned this option as compared to FRs (20.22%), which means that males are more suspicious of fraud in election process as compared to females.

In the case of Balochistan, not a single respondent agreed that the elections will be completely free and fair. To the contrary, an overwhelming majority of 74.07% said the elections will not be free and fair at all, 22.22% said the elections will be free and fair to some extent while 3.70% respondents opted for the do not know option. In Sindh Rural category, 47.36% respondents said the elections will not be free and fair at all while only 5.26% said they will be completely free and fair. Among the rest, 31.57% respondents said the elections will be free and fair to some extent, 10.52% opted for the do not know option while 5.26% did not answer this question. In the case of respondents from FATA/GB, 46.87% said the elections will not be free and fair at all while the same percentage said the elections will be free and fair to some extent. Only 6.25% said the elections will be completely free and fair. Among the respondents from AJK, 11.11% said the elections would be completely free and fair, 5.55% said the elections will not be free and fair at all, 77.77% said they will be free and fair to some extent, while 5.55% opted for the do not know option. In case of respondents from KP, 32.60% said the elections will not be free and fair at all, 52.17% said they will be free and fair to some extent, 8.69% said they will be completely free and fair while 6.52% respondents opted for the do not know option. In the case of Punjab, 60.44% respondents said the elections will be free and fair to some extent, 24.44% said they will not be free and fair at all, 8% said they will be completely free and fair while 7.11% said they do not know.

The major findings from this question were that not a single respondent from Balochistan agreed that the elections would be completely free and fair. On the contrary, an overwhelming majority of 74.07% said the elections will not be free and fair at all. From Sindh Rural and FATA/GB too high percentages of respondents (47.36% and 46.87%, respectively) expressed complete distrust in the transparency of the election process. Percentage of those who thought that elections will not be free and fair at all was the lowest (24.44%) for Punjab, which means that respondents from Punjab expressed the highest level of trust in the transparency of the electoral process.

Another question asked was that keeping in view the current situation, who/which institution can rig the elections. The Pakistan Army emerged to be the one which the majority of the respondents suspected of rigging. More than half of the respondents (52.95%) said that the

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army will rig the elections while 30.60% mentioned political parties. Civil bureaucracy was mentioned by 6.80% while judiciary by 4.25% respondents. Only 4.45% said that no one will rig the elections and 0.95% did not clearly mark any of the options. In the previous question, 7.30% of the respondents said that the elections will be completely free and fair, therefore, percentage of those who thought that no one will rig the elections should have been consistent with the previous question, but this was not the case as only 4.45% respondents opted for the "no one" option. This difference in responses to the two questions reflects the non-serious attitude of some of the respondents.

Table -3: Keeping the present scenario in view, who can rig the elections?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political parties	130	30.60	30.60
Army/intelligence agencies	225	52.95	83.55
Civil bureaucracy	29	6.80	90.35
Judiciary	18	4.25	94.6
None	19	4.45	99.05
Did not respond	4	0.95	100
Total	425	100.0	

Different political observers present different types of explanations for the high percentage of educated youth suspecting the army of rigging. Some believe that military coups and long direct military rule in the past are still shaping public opinion about the army's interference in elections. Others think that the army has always taken keen interest in influencing election outcomes, so this is reflected in educated youth's perceptions. They mention the Asghar Khan Case and the dismissal of elected governments after the restoration of civilian rule in 1988 as strong examples of army's interference in the electoral process. For many, ECP's decision to deploy army at polling stations (Malik, 2018) should also have influenced youth's opinion to believe that the army will rig the elections. Some participants of focus group discussion also pointed to the disqualification of former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, his subsequent indirect references to the army as the main force behind his disqualification and that his party will face invisible forces in the elections as an important factor making the army further suspect in the eyes of people.

Some incidents of the army's involvement in the election process also give credence to educated youth's concerns about election rigging by the army. For example, District and Sessions Judge Kasur Sardar Tahir Sabir, who was to serve as District Returning Officer (DRO), on 26th June wrote a letter to Lahore High Court (LHC) in which he complained that he had received a letter from Major Murtaza Ahmed, Acting Commanding Officer Abdul Majeed Axe Camp Kasur, directing him and other election officers to attend a conference on the upcoming general elections at a military camp in Kasur. LHC forwarded the letter to the ECP asking it to take action over the "derogatory" letter (Sikandar, 2018, July 1). A few days later, DRO Sargodha complained to the ECP that he had received a letter from Officer Commanding Rachna Warriors 29 Radar Controlled Gun Air Defence Regiment, Sargodha directing him to attend a meeting in his office on July 2. ECP then took up the matter with GHQ which admitted the incidents to be the consequence of a mistake (Abbasi, 2018).

The allegations levelled by former judge of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui made the army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) further vulnerable to suspicion of rigging the elections. While addressing a function organized by Rawalpindi Bar Association

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just four days before the elections, Justice Siddiqui alleged that the ISI approached chief justice of IHC seeking assurance that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz would not be released before the elections (Shehzad, 2018) ---as IHC was hearing appeals against an accountability court's conviction of the two.

In the academic-wise analysis, there emerged a huge difference in the thinking of students from social sciences and natural sciences. Among SSRs, 65.24% mentioned the army, 24.59% political parties/candidates, 4.81% civil bureaucracy, and 2.67% judiciary. Only 2.13% said no one will rig the elections while 0.53% did not mark any option. In NSRs category, the army was cited by 40.18% (as compared to 65.24% in case of SSRs), political parties/candidates by 37.38%, civil bureaucracy by 8.87%, judiciary by 5.60% while 6.07% said no one will rig the elections. Four respondents (1.86%) did not answer this question. The major differences in the responses of the two groups emerged in their perceptions about the role of the army and political parties with regard to election rigging. As compared to NSRs, SSRs seem to be more suspicious of the army's interference in the electoral process as 65.24% of them thought that the army will rig elections as compared to just 40.18% among NSRs. On the other hand, for NSRs, political parties/candidates seem to be more prone to indulging in election rigging as 37.38% of them mentioned political parties as compared to 24.59% from among SSRs. The major factor for this big difference in thinking of social and natural sciences students seems to be that natural sciences students overwhelmingly rely on propaganda without looking at the phenomenon critically like social sciences students.

Among MRs, 61.94% mentioned the army, 23.89% political parties, 4.42% civil bureaucracy, 3.53% judiciary, 4.86% said no one will rig the elections while 1.31% respondents did not address this question. In the FRs category, 38.20% mentioned the army, 42.13% political parties, 8.98% civil bureaucracy 5.05% judiciary, 4.49% said no one will rig the elections while 1.12% respondents did not answer this question. The results show that there is a huge difference in perceptions of male and female respondents with regard to the possibility of election rigging by the army and political parties. Among the MRs, more than three-fifths (61.94%) mentioned the army as compared to 38.20% by FRs while a much higher percentage of FRs mentioned political parties/candidates (42.13%) as compared to MRs (23.89%). When asked about possible reasons for this huge difference in the attitudes of MRs and FRs toward the army and political parties, a male student of social sciences said that (2018) said "Army has a huge following amongst Pakistani females owing to its status, affluence and the holy image that it has created. Hence, females are generally softer in their criticism of the army than males."

In the case of Balochistan, a vast majority of 92.59% mentioned the army, 3.70% cited political parties while 3.70% said that no one will rig the elections. Among respondents from Sindh Rural, 42.10% mentioned the army, 36.84% political parties, and 10.52% each civil bureaucracy and judiciary. In the case of FATA/GB, 53.12% cited the army, 25% political parties, 9.37% civil bureaucracy and 6.25% judiciary while 6.25% respondents opted for 'none' option. Among AJK respondents, 50% named the army, 38.88% political parties and 11.11% judiciary. Among respondents from KP, 63.04% mentioned the army, 22.82% political parties, 7.60% civil bureaucracy, 2.17% judiciary while 4.34% said that no one will rig the elections. In the case of Punjab, 45.77% of the respondents mentioned the army, 36% political parties, 7.11% civil bureaucracy, 4.44% judiciary and 4.88% said that no one will rig the elections while 1.77% respondents did not answer this question.

The responses to this question show that Balochistan, FATA/GB and KP are the areas where
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the army is suspected the most for rigging elections. After interviews, focused group discussions, and informal conversations with the students at the campus, the researchers reached the conclusion that the army's frequent interactions with the people in FATA, Balochistan, and KP, military operations against militants, and the army's unofficial role in administrative affairs have played deep role in shaping public opinion to suspect it for rigging elections. According to a research student at the university, the turmoil in these regions (FATA, Balochistan, and KP) and its consequences are linked with the army that is why a large number of respondents express their misgivings about its role in election rigging. In Sindh, Punjab, and AJK too, the army emerged to be the most suspected actor for rigging elections, but political parties were also mentioned by a large number of respondents from these areas. The difference between those who mentioned the army and political parties was not as big as in the case of the first group of areas.

Responding to the question as for which party he/she would vote in the 2018 elections, 58.58% opted for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), 16.23% for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), 8% for Pakistan People's Party (PPP), 4.95% for Awami National Party (ANP), 2.35% for Muttahida Majlis-s-Amal (MMA) 1.65% for Awami Workers Party (AWP), 3.29% opted for other smaller parties and independent candidates while 4.95% respondents said they would not vote for any party. An interesting finding was that only 10 out of 425 respondents (2.35%) expressed their intention to vote for the religious parties' coalition. This shows educated youth's apathy toward the politico-religious parties in the country. Another important finding of the survey was the emergence of AWP as a new political force. Keeping in view the fact that it is less known party across the country, scoring 1.64% was not a small achievement.[3]

Table- 4: For which party would you like to vote?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
PML-N	69	16.23	16.23
PPP	34	8	24.23
PTI	249	58.58	82.81
MMA	10	2.35	85.16
ANP	21	4.95	90.11
AWP	7	1.65	91.76
Others/ Independents	14	3.29	95.05
Will not vote	21	4.95	100
Total	425	100	

Though the above results are far from the real results of the elections, as PTI won far less a percentage of votes than it got in this survey, this difference is understandable keeping in view the fact that PTI's main support was the youth while all the respondents in the survey were also young with many going to vote for the first time. This connection between the youth and PTI has been beautifully expressed by Hussain (2019) who writes, "For the young people of Pakistan, the anti-corruption narrative introduced by the emerging leadership of the PTI was a real reason to participate in the electoral process." He further states, "The educated youth who voted for the PTI thought they had seen some light at the end of the tunnel."

Among SSRs, 48.66% mentioned PTI, 14.43% PML-N, 10.16% PPP, 9.09% ANP, 3.20% AWP, 1.60% MMA, 4.18% other smaller political parties/independent candidates, while 8.02% respondents said they will not vote for anyone. Among NSRs, 66.82% mentioned PTI, 16.35% PML-N, 6.54% PPP, 3.27% MMA, 1.40% ANP, 0.46% AWP, 1.86% smaller political

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parties/independents, and 3.27% said they will not vote for any party/candidate. An interesting aspect of findings in this question was that as compared to SSRs, a much higher percentage of NSRs opted for PTI (48.66% among SSRs compared to 66.82% among NSRs). Another important finding was that a higher percentage of NSRs was inclined toward rightist political parties like MMA, PTI, and PML-N while secular parties like PPP, ANP, and AWP had more supporters among SSRs as compared to NSRs. For example, 70% of those who expressed their desire to vote for MMA were from the natural sciences while 85% of those who said they would vote for ANP were from social sciences.

Among the MRs, 50.88% mentioned PTI, 15.48% PML-N, 7.52% PPP, 3.98% MMA, 8.40% ANP, 2.65% AWP, 5.75% smaller parties and independents while 5.30% said they will not vote for any party. Among the FRs, 68.53% mentioned PTI, 16.85% PML-N, 8.42% PPP, 1.12% ANP, 0.56% AWP, 0.56% smaller parties/independents while 3.93% said they will not vote for any party. The major findings of this question were that as compared to MRs, PTI enjoyed 18% more popularity among FRs while support for PPP and PML-N was almost the same among respondents of both genders. The comparatively small political parties like MMA, ANP, AWP, and PMAP enjoyed little support among FRs as compared to MRs. For example, out of the ten respondents who mentioned MMA, nine were male. Similarly, of the 21 respondents who cited ANP, 19 were male respondents while out of 7 prospective voters of AWP, 6 were male. In short, we can say that smaller parties enjoy less support among female voters as compared to male voters.

Among respondents from Balochistan, PTI emerged to be the party with the highest level of support as 22.22% respondents said they will vote for it. Among the remaining respondents, 14.81% mentioned PMAP, 11.11% each PPP, ANP, and PML-N, 3.70% each AWP, MMA, and BNP-M while 18.51% said they will not vote for any of the parties. In Sindh Rural category, PTI was mentioned by 73.68% respondents, PPP by 10.52%, MMA and PML-N each by 5.26% while 5.26% said they will not vote for any party. Among respondents from FATA/GB, 59.37% expressed their desire to vote for PTI, 12.5% for PPP, 9.37% for ANP, 3.12% each for PML-N, MMA, AWP, and Balawaristan National Front while 6.24% respondents said they will not vote for any party/candidate. In the case of respondents from AJK, 83.33% said PTI was their favourite party (as there were no elections in AJK, so they were asked about their favourite party), 11.11% mentioned PML-N while 5.55% mentioned PPP. Among respondents from KP, 54.34% mentioned PTI, 15.21% ANP, 8.69% each PPP and PML-N, 2.17% MMA, 1.08% each AWP and All Pakistan Muslim League, while 8.69% said they will not vote for any party/candidate. In case of Punjab, PTI emerged the most popular party with 60.88% followed by PML-N with 24%, PPP with 7.11%, AWP with 1.77%, MMA with 1.33% and Pakistan Muslim League-Q with 0.44%, while 4.44% respondents said they will either not vote or will vote for independent candidates.

According to the responses to this question, the highest level of PTI's popularity, in descending order, was recorded in Kashmir, Sindh Rural, Punjab and FATA/GB while it was the least popular in Balochistan where only 22.22% respondents said they would vote for it. Before the elections, KP was usually referred to as PTI's stronghold but respondents from KP expressed much less support for it than in most of the other provinces/units. This comparatively low level of support for PTI in KP, according to a PhD student with specialization in electoral studies was due to the incumbency factor as PTI had been in government in KP after 2013 elections. Another interesting finding of this question was that the highest level of support for MMA was recorded in Sindh Rural rather than Balochistan or FATA/GB as usually believed.

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The above question was followed by another question in which the respondents were asked about the reasons for voting for parties of their choice. Out of 425 respondents, 27.10% of respondents cited leadership of the concerned party, 25.65% ideology, 13.40% manifesto, 22.35% party stance, and 3.75% family pressure as the reasons for voting for a party. Among the remaining, 4.95% respondents had in the previous question expressed their intention not to vote so they were excluded from this question while 2.80% either did not mark any option or marked more than one option. After deeper analysis, it emerged that different parties attracted the educated voters for different reasons. In the case of PTI, 37.75% said they will vote for it because of its leader (Imran Khan), 25.30% because of the party's stance on current issues, 24.49% because of its ideology while 10.04% because of its manifesto. For PML-N, party stance on current issues was the main reason as 34.78% of its prospective voters mentioned it as the reason for voting for it. Among the rest, 20.28% mentioned party manifesto, 17.39% party leader, 13.04% ideology, while 14.49% family pressure. In the case of PPP, ideology and manifesto were mentioned by 64.07% respondents (ideology 38.23% and manifesto 26.47%), party leader by 17.64%, party stance on current issues by 14.70%, and family pressure by 2.94% respondents. For MMA, 40% mentioned its ideology, 30% leader, 20% manifesto while 10% its stance on current issues as the reasons to vote for it. Majority of ANP's supporters were influenced by its ideology as 71.42% respondents mentioned ideology, 9.52% manifesto, 4.76% party leader while 14.28% cited its stance on current issues. Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) was the only party all of whose prospective voters mentioned ideology as the reason for supporting it. In the case of AWP, 42.85%, cited ideology and 57.14% manifesto as the reason for supporting it.

Table-5: Why do you want to vote for this party?

Description	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Because of its manifesto	57	13.40	13.40
Because of its leadership	115	27.10	40.5
Due to family/friends' pressure	16	3.75	44.25
Because of its ideology	109	25.65	69.9
Its present stance on important issues.	95	22.35	92.25
Had already indicated not to vote	21	4.95	97.2
Did not respond, cited more than one option	12	2.80	100
Total	425	100	

Keeping in view the above findings, we can conclude that Imran Khan's personality was the most prominent factor for PTI's widespread support among the educated youth. Nawaz Sharif's aggressive stance (party's stance on current issues) after his disqualification by the Supreme Court also seems to have overshadowed the party's ideology and manifesto as the major factor to appeal to the voters. Parties like PPP, PMAP, ANP, MMA, and AWP seem to be well rooted ideologically as ideology emerged the major or exclusive (MPAM) reason for their support among the educated youth.

Explaining Imran Khan's charisma, a PhD student of School of Politics and International Relations said that people have expectations from Imran Khan without much believing in PTI as a political force. Similarly, an MPhil student of National Institute of Pakistan Studies in his interview with the researchers said that politics in Pakistan revolves around personalities rather than ideologies or manifestos. According to an independent researcher who wished not to be quoted by name, the politically aware people always vote for ideology while apolitical people from lower middle class take interest in issues and slogans.

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Among SSRs, 29.41% respondents mentioned ideology, 15.50% manifesto, 18.71% party leader, 22.99% party stance, and 2.67% family pressure as the reason for voting for parties/candidates of their choice. Among the remaining, 8.02% had already expressed their opinion not to vote for any party while 2.67% did not answer this question. Among NSRs, 22.42% cited ideology, 10.74% manifesto, 34.11% party leader, 23.83% party stance on current issues, 5.14% family pressure while 3.73% respondents had in the previous question indicated that they will not vote for any party/candidate. The comparative analysis of the two groups revealed that in case of SSRs, respondents mostly cited ideology and manifesto (44.91 collectively) as the reason for voting for parties of their choice while among NSRs, party leader and party stance emerged as the most popular reasons (57.94% together) for supporting parties of their choice. This factor may also, to some extent, explain the reason for a higher percentage of NSRs expressing desire to vote for PTI. Another important finding of the question was that the percentage of NSRs who mentioned family pressure as the reason for voting for a particular party was almost double the percentage for SSRs (2.67% for SSRs and 5.14% for NSRs).

In the case of MRS, 29.20% cited ideology as the reason, 16.37% manifesto, 19.91% political parties' stance on current issues, 23.45% party leader, 3.53% family pressure while 7.52% respondents either did not mention any reason or mentioned more than one option. Among FRs, 22.47% cited ideology, 8.98% manifesto, 32.58% party leader, 26.96% parties' current stance on issues, 4.49% family pressure while 4.49% either did not mark any option or marked more options than one. Among MRs, it was ideology and party manifesto that together attracted 45.57% respondents while in case of FRs, party leader and party stance were the most frequently cited reasons (59.54% collectively).

In the province-wise breakdown of the responses, ideology emerged as the most widely shared reason among respondents from Balochistan as it was mentioned by 40.74% of the respondents. Party manifesto and party stance on current issues were mentioned by 14.81% respondents each, party leader by 7.40%, family pressure by 3.70% while 18.51% said they will not vote. In the Sindh Rural case, 36.84% respondents mentioned party leader, 26.31% party stance on current issues, 21.05% ideology, 5.26% each manifesto and family pressure while 5.26% said they will not vote. In the case of FATA/GB, 34.37% respondents cited party ideology, 25% each party manifesto and party leader, 9.37% party stance on current issues while 6.25% respondents expressed their unwillingness to vote. Leader emerged to be the reason among 50% AJK respondents for their support to a party while ideology was named by 16.66%, stance on current issues by 22.22%, party manifesto and family pressure each by 5.55%. Among respondents from KP, 28.26% cited party leader, 26.08% ideology, 25% party stance, 9.78% manifesto, 2.17% family pressure while 8.69% were either not voting or did not answer the question properly. In the case of Punjab, 27.55% respondents cited party leader, 24.44% each party ideology and party stance, 14.22% manifesto, 4.88% family pressure while 4.44% respondents either expressed unwillingness to vote or did not answer the question correctly. The interesting finding of this question was that Balochistan and FATA/GB emerged as the areas where the highest percentage of respondents (40.74% and 34.37%, respectively) expressed their desire to vote on the basis of ideology.

Table-6: Which of the following has influenced your political views the most?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Electronic media	100	23.53	23.53
Social media	195	45.88	69.41
Political rallies	24	5.65	75.06

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Print media	31	7.30	82.36
Family	21	4.95	87.31
Friends and peers	45	10.58	97.89
Did not respond	9	2.11	100
Total	425	100%	

The next question asked in the questionnaire was about the means/source which influenced respondents' political views the most. Social media emerged as the means that influenced political views of the majority of the respondents (45.88 %) the most. Electronic media was cited by 23.53%, print media by 7.30%, friends-peers by 10.58%, activities of political parties by 5.65%, while family was cited by 4.95%. Nine respondents (2.11%) did not mark any of the options. Keeping in view the easy access to internet and affordable prices of smart mobiles, the influence of social media on the majority of youth's political views is understandable. Clips of mainstream electronic media and newspaper pieces are also uploaded on social media, so in one way the mainstream media has become part of social media.

Among the SSRs, 38.50% cited social media, 25.66% electronic media, 9.62% print media, 9.62% friends-peers, 6.95% activities of political parties, 5.34% family, while 4.27% said neither of these sources influenced their political views. Among the NSRs, 51.40% cited social media, 20.56% electronic media, 11.68% friends-peers, 5.60% print media, 5.14% each activities of political parties and family, while 1 respondent said none of these affected his/her political views. There was no remarkable difference in opinions of the two groups except that social media was cited by a much higher percentage of respondents from natural sciences (51.40% as compared to 38.50% by social sciences students).

In response to the question about which source influenced their political views the most, the responses were fairly similar from both genders. For example, 42.92% of the MRs and 48.87% of the FRs mentioned social media, 23.89% of the MRs and 21.34% of the FRs mentioned electronic media, 6.63% of the MRs and 8.42% of the FRs mentioned print media while 5.30% of the MRs and 6.74% of the FRs cited activities of political parties. The highest variation was found in the responses citing options of family and friends-peers. The option of friends-peers was mentioned by 14.15% MRs and 6.17% FRs. Similarly, family was mentioned by only 2.65% among MRs as compared to 8.42% among FRs. This indicates that family is a major source of political awareness for females while male get influenced more by their friends-peers.

In case of province-wise breakdown, social media emerged as the most influential tool in all provinces/administrative units. In the case of Balochistan, 55.55% respondents cited social media as the major source influencing their political views. 14.81% mentioned friends-peers, 11.11% activities of political parties, 7.40% each family and electronic media, while 3.70% print media. Among respondents from Sindh Rural, 36.84% cited social media, 15.78% each electronic media and friends-peers, 10.52% each print media and activities of political parties, 5.26% family pressure while 5.26% did not respond to this question. In the case of FATA/GB, 50% respondents cited social media, 28.12% electronic media, 9.37% friends-peers, 6.24% activities of political parties, 3.12% print media, while 3.12% did not respond to this question. Among AJK respondents, social media was mentioned by 72.22%, electronic media by 16.66%, print media and activities of political parties each by 5.55%. Among KP respondents, 42.39% mentioned social media, 28.26% electronic media, 11.95% friends-peers, 5.43% family, 4.34% each print media and activities of political parties while 3.26% did not respond to this question. In the case of respondents from Punjab, 44.44% cited social media, 24%

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electronic media, 10.22% friends-peers, 8.88% print media, 5.77% family, 5.33% activities of political parties, while 1.3% did not answer this question. With regard to this question, there were not remarkable variations in the responses from respondents from various provinces/units.

The respondents were also asked for their opinions about a constitutional role for the army in politics. More than two-fifths of the respondents (42.80%) expressed their strong disagreement about any constitutional role for the army in politics as compared to just 23.55% who strongly agreed with the idea. Of the remaining, 23.30% said they agreed to some extent, 2.80% said they agreed to a great extent, while 7.55 % opted for the 'do not know' option. Those who expressed strong agreement or agreement to some or to a great extent for the army's role in politics together make 49.63% of the total respondents which is a substantial figure.

Table-7: The army should be given a constitutional role in government affairs.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	100	23.55	23.55
Strongly disagree	182	42.80	66.35
Agree to some extent	99	23.30	89.65
Agree to a great extent	12	2.80	92.45
Do not know	32	7.55	100
Total	425	100	

When the researchers asked a PhD student of the Department of Politics and International Relations at International Islamic University Islamabad, he said that the rate of economic development under military regimes seems to still influence public opinion in favor of a constitutional role for the army. He thinks that the fact that the army is a strong institution which has been shaping public opinion may also be a reason for people supporting its constitutional role in politics. Some students pointed out that as political parties in the country are not performing well, so many people idealize and support the army's constitutional role in politics. The fact that the army is a disciplined, organized, and resourceful institution may also have influenced respondents' views.

Among SSRs, 52.40% respondents said they strongly disagree with any constitutional role for the army in politics while 17.11% said they strongly agree with the idea. Among the rest, 21.39% respondents said they agree to some extent, 1.60% said they agree to a great extent, while 7.48% said they "do not know." Among NSRs, 34.11% said they strongly disagree, 29.43% said they strongly agree, 25.70% said they agree to some extent, 3.27% said they agree to a great extent, 7% said they do not know while 1 respondent did not mark any of the choices. The findings show that among NSRs, there was a much higher rate of approval of constitutional role for the army in politics as compared to SSRs (29.43% for NSRs as compared to just 17.11% among SSRs). On the other hand, it emerged that the percentage of NSRs showing strong disagreement with the idea was much lower than among SSRs (34.11% among NSRs as compared to 52.40% among SSRs). In short, among NSRs there emerged a much higher rate of approval for a constitutional role for the army in politics.

Among MRs, only 17.69% said they strongly agree with the idea while 50.44% said they strongly disagree with it. Among the remaining, 2.21% said they agree to a great extent, 19.02% said they agree to some extent, while 10.61% opted for the do not know option. Among the FRs, 32.02% said they strongly agree with the idea while the same percentage expressed their strong disagreement. Among the others, 2.24% said they agree to a great extent, 29.77% said

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they agree to some extent, 3.37% opted for the do not know option while 0.56% (1 respondent) did not mark any of the options. The major difference in the thinking of male and female respondents with regard to this question was that only 17.69% of MRs strongly agreed with the idea of constitutional role for the army while for FRs, it was almost double (32.02%). On the other hand, a much higher percentage (50.44%) of MRs expressed strong disagreement with this idea as compared to only 32.02% among the FRs. Thus, it can be concluded from the responses to this question that females, as compared to males, hold more favourable opinions about a constitutional role for the army in politics.

In the case of Balochistan, 62.96% respondents said they strongly disagree with this idea while only 14.81% said they strongly agree. Among the rest, 7.40% said they agree to some extent, 3.70% said they agree to a great extent while 11.11% did not respond to this question. Among respondents from Sindh Rural, 47.36% said they strongly agree, 26.31% said they strongly disagree, 21.05% said they agree to some extent, and 5.26% said they agree to a great extent. Among FATA/GB respondents, only 6.25% said they strongly agree while 56.25% said they strongly disagree. Among the remaining, 6.25% said they agree to a great extent, 18.75% said they agree to some extent while 12.5% said they do not know. In the AJK category, 44.44% said they strongly agree as compared to 38.88% who said they strongly disagree while 16.66% said they agree to some extent. In the case of KP, 47.82% expressed their strong disagreement as compared to only 16.30% who said they strongly agree. The option of agree to a great extent was mentioned by 1.08% respondents, agree to some extent by 22.82%, while 11.95% opted for the do not know option. Among respondents from Punjab, 37.77% said they strongly disagree while 26.22% said they strongly agree. 2.22% said they agree to a great extent, 27.55% said they agree to some extent while 6.22% said they do not know.

The responses to this question show that Balochistan, FATA/GB, and KP were the areas from which much higher percentages of respondents as compared to other provinces/units expressed strong disagreement with the idea to give constitutional role to the army in politics. Similarly, the lowest percentages of respondents with strong agreement with this idea were also recorded from these areas.

6.   Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed a huge trust deficit among educated youth in the transparency of the electoral process and parliament/politicians' abilities to address the problems faced by the country. For example, only 7.30% of the respondents believed that the election will be completely free and fair while 30.80% said it will not be free and fair at all. Majority of the respondents suspected the army for rigging the elections. With regard to a constitutional role for the army in politics, the percentage of those who said they strongly agree with the idea was almost half of the percentage that expressed strong disagreement. When asked as for which party they will vote, almost three-fifths mentioned PTI. This support, however, was mainly due to party leadership rather than its ideology.

The survey results show that educated youth's gender, their ethnic, social, sectarian, political, economic, and academic backgrounds have a deep impact on their attitudes toward electoral politics. Male respondents emerged to be more critical of the army's role in politics than female students while the same is true for social sciences' students as compared to natural sciences students. Similarly, students from Balochistan, FATA/GB, and KP were found to be more critical of the army's role in politics as compared to their counterparts from Punjab, Sindh, and
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AJK. On the other hand, students from natural sciences as compared to those from social sciences and female students as compared to male students have far less trust in the parliament and politicians. Furthermore, youth from Balochistan and FATA/GB, as compared to their counterparts from Kashmir, Punjab, and Sindh, have more doubts about the transparency of the electoral process. An interesting aspect of the study is that all the hypotheses have been proved correct by the survey results.

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Notes:

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[1] In order to make the title exactly reflect the data, one question was not included in the analysis.

[2] There are several universities in Islamabad but the researcher chose Quaid-i-Azam University to make his sample more representative. Unlike other universities in the federal capital, there are admission quotas in QAU for all provinces and administrative units like erstwhile FATA, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir, so students from every part of the country can be found at this university. Similarly, most of the universities in Islamabad used to charge high fees from students as compared to Quaid-i-Azam University, so it attracts students from all socio-economic classes of Pakistan society. It is because of this diversity at the university that it is also referred to as Mini Pakistan. It was due to these reasons that the researcher chose QAU for this study.

[3] 1.64% is not a big figure for a political party. However, when we compare this figure with the overall performance of the party in the 2018 elections, this is a much better figure. For example, AWP polled 17935 votes countrywide which is 0.037% of the votes polled by PTI, PML-N. PPP, MMA, Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan, and Independents collectively. If we add votes polled by all political parties, the share of AWP will further decrease as there were further 28 political parties that polled more votes than AWP.

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Annexure: Survey Questionnaire

Faculty: (A) Social sciences   (B)   Other than social sciences
Program: (A) BS   (B) MSC   (C) MPhil   (D) PhD
Gender: (A) Male   (B) Female
Domicile: (A) Punjab   (B) KP   (C) Baluchistan   (D) Sindh Rural
               (E) Sindh Urban   (F) FATA   (G) GB

There are several options at the end of each question. Please tick only one option from each question.

1. Do you think that the upcoming elections will be free and fair?
   (A) Completely free and fair   (B) To some extent   (C) Not at all   (D) Don't know.

2. Keeping the present scenario in view, who can rig the elections?
   (A) Political parties   (B) Army/intelligence agencies   (C) Civil bureaucracy
   (D) judiciary   (E) None.

3. Pakistan's problems can be solved through electoral politics/parliament?
   (A) Strongly agree   (B) Strongly disagree   (C) Agree to some extent
   (D) Do not know

4. For which party would you like to vote?
   (A) PML-N   (B) PPP   (C) PTI   (D) MMA   (E) If any other party _____

5. Why you want to vote for this party?
   (A) Because of its manifesto   (B) Because of its leader   (C) Family/friends' pressure
   (D) Because of its ideology   (E) Because of its stance on important issues

6. Which of the following has influenced your political views the most?
   (A) Mainstream media   (B) Social media   (C) Political rallies   (D) Print media
   (E) Family   (F) Friends and peers.

7. Army should be given constitutional role in government affairs.
   (A) Strongly agree   (B) strongly disagree   (C) Agree to some extent
   (D) Agree to greater extent   (E) Do not know

8. Are you satisfied with the current role of electronic media?
   (A) Totally   (B) Not at all   (C) To greater extent   (D) To some extent.

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