Engaging the youth – citizenship and political participation in Pakistan

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Engaging the youth – citizenship and political participation in Pakistan

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The article explores the issue of youth political participation in Pakistan. In the light of the attention devoted by the Pakistani press to the youth vote in the 2013 Pakistani elections, this article discusses young Pakistanis' articulation of their views on mainstream politics and their views of the state, and attempts to answer the question as to why young people in Pakistan are disillusioned with mainstream politics. The article focuses in particular on the perceptions held by those in their late teens to late 20s. Since 59 per cent of Pakistan's population is below the age of 24 and overall over 67 per cent of the population is under 30, their views on the state, rights, responsibilities and their concept of citizenship are a window into how Pakistan is likely to develop. The focus of the article is on voices that are rarely heard and which stand in stark contrast to the solutions offered by the institutional literature. The research is located in the wider discussion of the concept of citizenship and builds on previous work on citizenship in Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan; youth; political literacy; political participation; citizenship; education

Introduction

The article explores the issue of youth political participation in Pakistan and attempts to answer the question of why young people in Pakistan are disillusioned with mainstream politics and reluctant to participate. The research is located in the wider discussion of the concept of citizenship and builds on previous work on citizenship in Pakistan (Lall, 2012a, 2012b).

In the light of the attention in the Pakistani press with regard to the youth vote in the 2013 Pakistani elections (Zaidi, 2013), this article discusses young Pakistanis' articulation of their views on mainstream politics and their views on the state, focusing in particular on the perceptions held by those in their late teens to late 20s.

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Since Pakistan has, like many countries in the neighbourhood, a very young population,[1] the views of the younger generation are a key determinant on how the country is likely to develop in the future. At the heart of the research are the voices of ordinary young Pakistanis who explain in their own words how they view politics and why they do or do not see any scope in participation. The research found that a majority of the young people surveyed and interviewed for this work see little or no point in being politically active, given corruption, and feel that Pakistan's power structures prevent rather than encourage participation. This reflects findings of a number of surveys conducted in the last few years (British Council, 2009; Jinnah Institute, 2013; Yusuf, 2011). The article contributes to this discussion by focusing on the voices of the young people, something that is not reflected in the wider surveys. Young people say that they understand their rights and responsibilities but have no conception of democratic institutions and how these can be used to take the political process forward. They also do not know how the government institutions work and that engagement with the system can help them access the resources of the state to solve their local problems such as education and health. The main reason for non-participation is their disillusionment with the political hierarchies and feelings of helplessness. Many feel that they cannot break Pakistan's entrenched political mould and consequently, they feel that their responsibilities are focused on the family and at the community level rather than at the national level.[2] The article argues that despite the increased interest in politics in the spring of 2013, overall political literacy remains low, largely due to a failure of the education system to provide even a limited level of civic education. The article goes beyond the headlines and critically discusses the consequences of public institutions not being perceived as relevant.

The article is based on the fieldwork conducted in three phases in 2009, 2011 and 2012 in over 40 schools and colleges across Pakistan. Whilst the research does not aim to be representative as the samples are relatively small, the focus is on what young people had to say, voices which are rarely heard and which stand in stark contrast to the solutions offered by institutional literature.

After discussing the definition of citizenship and the importance of political participation in the building of citizenship, the article gives some background on the situation of citizenship and education in Pakistan. The article goes on to discuss the data collected in the light of an increased awareness by the establishment that the youth is opting out of politics, how newer parties, in particular Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are trying to re-engage young people, and the hype of the youth vote in the 2013 elections.

Citizenship and the role of political participation

There are a number of definitions of citizenship. Joppke, for instance, defines citizenship as status, rights and identity (Joppke, 2007). Kivisto and Faist

(2007) see citizenship as establishing the boundaries of the political community, defining who is in and who is out based on access to political life, as well as a sense of belonging through national identity. Often, the focus in the literature is on rights and/or responsibilities; however, referring to Pakistan, Dean (2007) explains:

> In addition, to rights and responsibilities, citizens also have different roles to play. Some of these roles are to participate actively in respecting the rights of others, active political engagement to enact just laws and to act to change unjust laws in a peaceful and responsible manner (Crick, 1998) and joining voluntary groups and organizations to take actions in the interest of the public good. (p. 4)

Whilst citizenship and participation are not the same thing, Dean emphasises active participation as an important part of citizenship. In her view, rights and responsibilities can only be guaranteed if citizens understand the role that laws play in guaranteeing these rights and if citizens are prepared to take action for the wider community. This also implies taking part in the political process. Verba, Schlozman and Brady define political engagement as 'activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make these policies' (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, p. 38). Voting is one way of trying to influence government action, either by supporting the policies of the political party in power, or by using elections to get rid of that particular party at the helm of government.[3] Voting is also both a right and a responsibility, and is therefore an important link between citizenship and formal political participation.[4] On the basis of this definition, being politically aware – that is, by following debates through the media, is not sufficient to be considered politically active. For individuals to feel able to participate in the process, a certain level of 'political literacy' is necessary. Crick says that: '[. . .] political activity is too important to be left to politicians' (2000, p. 130) and therefore, ordinary people need to be involved.

Crick develops the concept of political literacy that is imparted through education, but is ' . . . more than a school educational subject' (2000, p. 110). He discusses political participation as an essential element of citizenship. He describes political literacy as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, developing alongside each other, each one enforcing the other two. Davies (2008) also believes that there are reasons why political literacy should be promoted: 'Politics has to connect with young people: it must be taught and learned in ways that are congruent with the essential nature of political education . . . ' (Davies, 2008, p. 381). Dean (2004, 2007) has argued that in Pakistan, political literacy is low as there is a lack of dedicated citizenship

education. This is not unusual in societies that have a history of military dicta-torships. But today, although no longer ruled by a military dictator and having reverted to a multi-party democracy, political literacy in Pakistan remains very low – even in urban centres and amongst the educated middle classes. Formal state education has not imparted much with regard to the elements of citizen-ship (Dean, 2005; Lall, 2012b).

Clearly, the problem goes beyond what schools do or do not teach. One of the priorities of civil society organisations today is the education of the youth, especially with regard to the new social and political structures. This form of education is located outside the formal state educations system. Packham acknowledges that those working with the youth, ' … have an important role as informal educators […] to enable participants to think critically […] and to identify who will benefit and how' (2008, p. 40). The problem in Pakistan is that there is little youth education outside formal schooling and that few adults recognise that they have to act as an example to the youth. In addition, civil society in Pakistan focuses largely on delivering the kinds of services that the state does not deliver (such as education and health). The lack of civil society organisations from which the youth can learn political participation is enforced by patronage networks (that are discussed in the next section) which distort the political process.

Citizenship and political participation in Pakistan

Across the literature, political participation is actively encouraged, in particular with regard to the youth. However, on the ground in Pakistan, the concept of citizenship is rather vague and political participation is not necessarily seen as part of it. A study conducted by Dean (2004) in Pakistan found that Pakis-tanis had five conceptions of citizenship. Citizenship is thought of in terms of being born in Pakistan, sharing a common culture, being patriotic, sharing a common religious identity and as someone who has to fulfil duties. These duties tend to relate to the wider family and immediate community (Lall, 2012a). Lyon (2002, 2004) has analysed Pakistan's asymmetrical power and patronage relationships, explaining how society works, and Lieven (2011), build-ing on Lyon's arguments, maintains that the political relations depend on patronage that come from a clan-, caste- or sect-based political system and that even the army has developed a patronage system. According to him, Pakistanis are largely 'passive citizens' who expect much from the state, but who are not necessarily prepared to play the necessary active role.

Not all Pakistan analysts explain social and political processes through kinship networks. Hull's (2012) work on government bureaucracy argues that kinship-based issues are much less common in Islamabad and has come up with an interesting analysis on how documents produce social relations in

Pakistan's political system. Hassan (2002) in his essay on 'the roots of elite alienation' takes the view that political participation has changed because the elites have disengaged. He argues that Pakistan was a politically active society, but that the populism started by Bhutto and the islamisation enforced and consolidated by Zia has resulted in a society where the elites have no interests in local processes and see their future outside Pakistan.

Lall also does not see patronage as the main pivot around which social and political processes in Pakistan revolve and has argued that today, a relationship or connection as such between individuals and the state does not exist and that individuals live their lives in parallel to the state with very little interaction, creating another fault line in Pakistan's political landscape (Lall, 2012a). The conception of citizenship in Pakistan is shaped by recent history where an Islamisation process muddied the water of national identity construction (Lall, 2008) as well as a stagnant political context which has to date oscillated between military dictatorships and spells of democratic governments, not allowing much room for the development of a reciprocal relationship between citizens and their state.

The role of education

Education is generally used as a tool by the state to inculcate the 'state's ideology' in the masses. This is particularly the case with the construction of national identity (Lall & Vickers, 2009). However, beyond this, education in general and the school curriculum in particular also play a vital role in shaping the concept of citizenship and the role of the state in the minds of people. Kaltsounis and Osborne are of the view that 'the raison d'être of social studies education in a democratic society is the preparation for citizenship' (Kaltsounis, 1994; Osborne, 1997). The skills acquired through a curriculum are necessary for 'informed participation in a democracy' (Dean, 2007). The concepts which Dean refers to include the notions of rights, responsibilities and political participation, which go beyond the construction of national identity and refer to a 'social contract' with corresponding institutional structures that are recognised by society and whose function is understood. Democracy demands active political participation from citizens and as Crick explained, political literacy has to be learnt. However, there is no separate civic education in Pakistan[5] as it is integrated into social studies/Pakistan studies. Dean's various studies show that 'little time is allocated for civic education' [...] Textbooks promote [...] virtues of piety, obedience and sense of duty but not the virtues of justice, equality and diversity ... ' (Dean, 2007, pp. 11–12). When asked about the barriers to participation in the IIS survey, the majority of the young respondents cited a 'lack of education as the root

cause of why young people in Pakistan are unable to contribute to the society as active citizens'.

In addition to the lack of targeted education, research shows that the conception of the state and with it of citizenship differs depending on the type of school young people attend (Lall, 2012b). The issue therefore goes beyond what is offered by the curriculum. The school and familial context are equally important, but tend to be fragmented as society is divided on ethnic, religious and class lines. The other issue often ignored is that no matter what is taught in school, a large number of young Pakistanis do not go through the formal education system and many, who do start, drop out before finishing primary school.[6] Since formal civic education provision only begins in class four, those who leave before do not benefit (Dean, 2007). One organisation, the Centre for Civic Education Pakistan, has focused its most recent education campaign on the understanding and support of the changes brought about by the 18th Amendment (Centre of Civic Education Pakistan [CCE], 2011). Whilst an increased focus on ethnic diversity needs to be commended, research by the British Council (2009, 2013) in 2009 and 2013 and the CCE in 2011 shows that young people need first and foremost a more basic understanding of how the system works, starting with how to register in order to vote, rather than dealing with complex constitutional matters (CCE, 2011).

Yet, despite this state of affairs, civic education is seen as the panacea for all the ills of society and has been noted in a number of official reports such as the British Council (2009) and CCE (2009), which are discussed below. However, civic education does not always lead to higher political literacy. In her research, Dean (2007) found that civic education had not been successful because along with civic education, changes in the social, political, economic and cultural systems are also needed for societal change. The civic education experts she spoke to noted that while raising awareness was important, it did not necessarily lead to action for systemic change and that success had come when concerned groups and their supporters had been mobilised to advocate for implementation of existing laws, changes in existing discriminatory laws and practices and for new legislation (2007, p. 12).

The youth and political participation

In their article 'The democracy barometers, surveying South Asia', De Souza, Palshikar, and Yadav (2008) argue that those in Pakistan supporting democracy as a form of government (identified here as 'strong democrats') are down to 10 per cent and 48 per cent are defined as 'weak democrats' (p. 90). 41 per cent of the population self-defines as non-democrats and the support for democracy ratio is 0.24 (p. 91). As such, Pakistan is different from all the other South Asian countries where democrats outnumber non-democrats in much higher

numbers (p. 89). De Souza et al. also contend that those who are more educated tend to support democracy more than those who are not (p. 92) and that having experienced democracy also had a positive correlation with being supportive of democracy. As a result of Pakistan's many years under military rule, today's youth has had less exposure to democracy than in other South Asian countries, and according to De Souza this matters.

Pakistan possesses one of the largest youth populations in the world. Out of the 180 million, 59 per cent are below the age of 24 and overall over 67 per cent are under 30 (Yusuf, 2011). But who are the youth in Pakistan? The Institute of Social Studies' study on youth participation in Pakistan (2008) notes that the operational definition of 'youth' varies from country to country (p. 15) and emphasises that the 'social construction of youth in Pakistan may vary enormously in urban and rural environments' (p. 17). Another difficulty related to defining 'youth' in research on politics is that much of the literature has focused on youth as 'students' (as in higher education) and student politics (such as Nasr, 1992; Nelson, 2009, 2011; see also Jinnah Institute [JI], 2013, pp. 7–8). As mentioned above, the majority of young people in Pakistan will never finish their education and will have dropped out on the way. The mixed role that education plays in developing a notion of citizenship and participation has been discussed above. It is therefore important to keep in mind the issue of class and levels of education when discussing the youth and formal political participation. Most surveys examined below do not do this; however, this article includes many voices from students in poor areas and slum schools who are unlikely to ever join a higher education institution.

This article argues that a majority of the young people surveyed and interviewed as a part of this research see little or no point in being politically active, given corruption, and feel that Pakistan's power structures prevent rather than encouraging participation.

Yusuf's (2011) work discusses how the youth's confidence in public institutions is 60 per cent in the army, 40 per cent in religious institutions and less than 10 per cent in the national government. This reflects the ISS survey of 2008 which explains that 76 per cent of the young people they surveyed see politics as a 'closed space' where they cannot be included (p. 37) and 87 per cent see government as 'hidden power' (p. 39). Yusuf's survey puts political participation as 21.9 per cent. 'Perhaps the most alarming is how averse Pakistani youth are to direct political activity' (Yusuf, 2011, p. 5). This is despite the creation of a youth parliament in 2007.[7] In part, this is because the lack of interest that the government has in playing a role for young people which is evident from the allocation of budget for the youth and the failure to formulate a 'National Youth Policy'. Another aspect is reflected in how political parties view the young people. Apart from general promises regarding education and employment shared by all parties, the concerns of the youth were not

reflected in political parties' manifestos in the run up to the 2013 elections. Only the PTI and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML(N)) promised seats to the youth in their programmes[8] (JI, 2013, pp. 7, 16).

The issue of citizenship and the youth is increasingly recognised as a public problem. Before the 2013 elections, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) issued a booklet with a list of what the youth in Pakistan *should* be doing, reflecting profound institutional unease about the lack of political engagement.[9]

In 'Pakistan: The Next Generation,' the authors admit that the 'next generation challenges can only be solved with the enthusiastic involvement of young people themselves' (British Council, 2009, p. 43). They contend that new opportunities for participation are needed at all levels of society as well as a fresh generation of leaders (who should not be the sons, daughters and nephews/nieces of the existing politicians, but a fresh breed, representing diverse classes and backgrounds) who are given responsibilities. However, even the word 'participation' can have different meanings in different contexts. Khan (n.d.) defines youth participation as

> . . . the cultivating and engaging process in which young people, in partnership with those who are able to assist them, can build their capacity to gradually take control of their lives and assume increased personal responsibility to conceptualize, plan, implement, control and evaluate their collective actions for personal and greater good. (p. 3)

So far, he argues that there has not been a public plan on how to get the youth to participate. 'Reaching out' in this case will require a creation of opportunities in education, employment, culture and other sectors that the state has so far been failing to provide.

Mullick (2008) examines the lessons from the history of youth-driven political dissent among Pakistani student unions. According to him, over the last 60 years, five major ideologies have, to varying degrees, shaped the student unions in Pakistan: progressivism, Islamism, sectarianism, ethnic-nationalism and constitutionalism.[10] Initially, student union dissent was peaceful, but as it became increasingly violent, the government outlawed many student unions. Both Nasr (1992) and Paracha (2000) offer a detailed history of campus politics and how this linked in with national politics. While Nasr focuses more on how Jamiat offered itself as an alternative to patronage-based politics, Paracha looks at how the violence on campus destroyed student politics and resulted in a ban. This ban is part of the reason that today young people do not identify with politics. Since the majority of the Pakistani youth who are now of voting age were born in the 1980s or later, they would not have experienced student politics and seen the link between student and national politics (JI, 2013, p. 17). This

relates to De Souza et al.'s argument that an experience of democracy encourages a pro-democratic outlook.

Allowed again after the Musharraf era, student unions today see constitutionalists, who are fighting for the rule of law, juxtaposed to Islamists, who according to Mullick (2008), are increasingly

> inclined toward abetting, or worse, joining militant organizations loosely connected to the Pakistani Taliban.
>
> Unlike the past waves of student activism, today's student activists are more technologically savvy and fighting for an overhaul of the system – a system corrupted by secularist ideas and laws according to the Islamists, and vulnerable to civilian failures and military takeovers according to the constitutionalists. (p. 9)

Nelson's (2009, 2011) work takes this a step further by looking at how the nature of student politics has changed and how the violence on campuses creates an impasse that has led to a rejection of state politics. Universities today are spaces in which religion becomes increasingly politicised. Students today, he argues, (both in Pakistan and in Bangladesh) turn from party politics to an alternative view of Islam that rejects traditional party-based politics. According to Nelson, student politics is now intrinsically linked to religion and the political consciousness is changing to reengaging with religious terms rather than secular political terms.

Again, the data collected in this research reflects the severe disillusionment of students in higher education institutions with politics. As will be seen, political participation is only lower at Madrassas.

The report mentioned above published by the Centre of Civic Education (CCE, 2009) makes a number of suggestions to improve political participation by the youth. They include the proposal that students' unions need to serve as a training ground for the youth to learn the art of politics by working on solutions to academic and administrative problems on campuses. Whilst student politics on campus is not meant to engage in national politics, political parties have a responsibility to engage the students through their youth wings and should devise a strategy to build their confidence in political institutions.[11] The report also addresses the fact that politicians should lead by example and, as public figures, should be seen as serving the nation rather than for their personal gain. In this way, the report hopes that the image of politics could be improved.

Yet, according to Khan (n.d.), young people are not getting involved in politics for a number of reasons which are not really related to the issues thrown up by the CCE report and which go beyond student politics that after all only affect those who access higher education.[12]

The literature and research reviewed above show that young people face obstacles in participation by the very institutions designed to facilitate

participation. The barriers are around pace and sustainability of participation, being counted and not being dominated by affluent youth who monopolise decisions, violence in student unions and the role played by political parties through non-inclusion. Whereas this may be true for those interfacing with these institutions, the data collected in the field research for this article found that these institutions are invisible to the majority of the youth. Not a single youth who took part in the survey or exercise identified an institutional block to participation.

The section below will present the data collected and the voices of the young people who took part in the research.

The data

This article is based on a mixed-methods research that collected primary source data between August and December 2009 and further qualitative data again between November and December 2011 and in December 2012. Most of the data was collected in Punjab, but the research took place in three provinces in the first research period and in all four provinces and Azad Kashmir in the second. Data was not collected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2009 due to the security situation at the time. However, the respondents included a large section of Pathans resident in Punjab and Sindh.

The data was collected in 12 private schools, 12 philanthropic schools, 10 government schools and 5 colleges and universities in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Data was also collected at three madrassas (one for girls and two for boys), one Jamaat-e-Islami private school (serving the middle classes) as well as from various Lahore higher education colleges. In the first research phase, a questionnaire with a qualitative and a quantitative section was distributed to students in class 10 (sometimes also class 9 and/or 11 depending on the institution). Over 1300 student questionnaires were filled in with very few blank returns. The questionnaire was available in Urdu or English. In the second research phase, follow-up work was conducted through a classroom exercise held with students usually from classes 9 and/or 10. Overall, the exercise was held in 15 schools with around 370 students.

These were purposive samples (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991) based on the premise that the research needed to access a certain number of male and female students across government, private, religious and philanthropic schools as well as some who were in higher education from all ethnic backgrounds and economic classes, including the most hard-to-reach poorer populations. The samples were chosen to be representative of the wider population of urban and rural Pakistan.

The political backdrop at the time of the first research phase is important, as it will have influenced those surveyed. The second half of 2009 was a

particularly violent time in Pakistan. There were a total of 12,600 violent deaths across the country in 2009 (14 times more than in 2006), half of which were in drone attacks.[13] The situation was not helped by the fact that Pakistan was at the time led by an unstable civilian government that was widely perceived to be corrupt.

It was decided to return to the field two years later to collect more data and to see how far attitudes and perceptions had changed. Given that there was no change in terms of the youth attitude surveyed, the article largely discusses both sets of data together. In December 2012, four more focus groups with 33 young people were conducted, specifically focusing on the upcoming elections. All 33 had taken their metric pass from their local philanthropic school. Some of these, but not all, had taken part in the research conducted in 2009.[14]

The research results

In the first research phase, the responses led to the research result that political awareness does not lead to political activity.

Political awareness vs. political participation[15]

The high levels of awareness did not come as a surprise (Table 1). This generation has lived through the lawyers' movement and the ousting of President/ General Musharraf. During Musharraf's tenure, the media expanded into hundreds of TV channels, many of which specialised in debate and talk shows. Whilst politics had until then been more of an elite concern with the working classes expected to support the local landlord's political ambition (through biraderi and patronage networks – see Lieven, 2011; Lyon, 2002), the last decade has seen a transformation of the political landscape and how politics is experienced (not, however, of the basic power structures that define how politics is conducted and who is elected).

Table 1.   Political awareness vs. politically active.

Response	Political awareness		Politically active	
	No. of respondents	Percentage	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very low	283	21.31	635	47.82
Low	380	28.61	324	24.40
High	404	30.42	217	16.34
Very high	220	16.57	106	7.98
No response	41	3.09	46	3.46
Total	1328	100.00	1328	100.00

Despite the popularisation of political debate and the many grievances, the dire situation on the ground and the acute need for political and social change, political activity was low across the board of the different types of schools, reflecting the bad image politics has across all sections of society (Lall, 2012b). The table below shows both political awareness and political activity broken up by the type of school[16] the students visited (Tables 2 and 3).

While it can be expected that political participation does not take a uniform shape everywhere, interestingly, the answers were very similar across gender, ethnic groups and province of residence. There were some differences between class groups, but the one factor, which showed differing responses, was the type of school attended. Political awareness was highest in government schools (53 per cent of the students) and lowest at madrassas (42 per cent of the students). The madrassa factor again comes as no surprise as certain religious leaders do not accept the separation of religious and secular life, including in politics and secular politics are badly viewed.[17] Politics is still seen as 'dirty business' and essentially corrupt and does not translate into action. However, there were vast variations in the responses with the lowest political activity in madrassas at over 80 per cent. This was followed closely by a lack of political activity amongst students in higher education at 80 per cent. This despite the fact that universities did become very politically active during the lawyers' movement of 2007–2008, which helped to oust Musharraf (Bolognani, 2011). Political activity was highest at government schools at 38 per cent. It could not be established

Table 2.   Number of students enrolled at different types of educational establishments.

Type of institution	Govt	Private	Phil	Graduate madrassas	HE	Other[a]
No. of students (respondents)	189	173	210	174	293	289

[a]Young people who were not in education or who did not specify type of institution.

Table 3.   Political awareness vs. politically active according to the institution at which students are enrolled.

High and very high	Politically aware (%)	Rank	Politically active (%)	Rank
Govt	52.91	1	38.10	1
HE	50.85	2	19.11	4
Private	49.13	3	30.64	3
Philanthropic	46.19	4	34.29	2
Madrassas	41.95	5	14.37	5
Average	48.51		26.76	

from the quantitative part of the research what form such political activity takes, and it became obvious that the distinction between political awareness and political activity is unclear.

The second research phase two years later showed that citizenship was still not a concept anyone related to and the same views were uttered about active participation. Students still saw their responsibility towards their families and local communities as primary. There was one crucial new finding which came out when speaking to many of the young people – they are increasingly interested and concerned in global issues and the term 'global citizenship' or words to that effect were used more frequently. Some of these schools had been part of or a cluster programme, linking private and government schools in joint projects. The students spoke in great detail about how they felt that the world shared problems such as pollution and environmental degradation and therefore there was a responsibility across countries to solve these issues together; they did not, however, link this to political participation at home in Pakistan and there was scant interest in national politics. In part, this is due to the increased access of the internet and digital resources including media and TV, bringing the wider world into the Pakistani classroom. What are clearly national problems with a national, often a political, solution (such as pollution) do not seem to lead the students to think in terms of political participation at the national level.

The next section brings quotes and opinions from the students who took part in the research, giving their views on political participation and why they are disillusioned with national politics and what being politically active actually means.

Lack of political participation – student voices

Broadly speaking, six reasons were given by the young people on why they are not politically active. These reasons are, of course, interrelated. Below each one will be discussed in turn.

- They consider the politicians and the state of affairs highly *corrupt*.
- *Family connections*: They believe that one cannot be successful in Pakistan's politics unless one has family connections or has a lot of money. Nepotism and favouritism make it even more difficult for the youth to think of pursuing a career in politics or to be politically active participants.
- *Violence*: They believe that to be involved in politics in Pakistan is risky, with threats to their life and property, and that of their family.
- *Helplessness*: They feel that nothing they do will change anything and that they cannot make a difference.

- *Responsibilities focus downwards*: They believe that they should focus on their studies or career. Their responsibilities are towards their families first and foremost.
- The youth lack a positive *role model*.

Corruption

Political involvement or activity is still seen as 'dirty' as most politicians are perceived as corrupt. A large majority of those surveyed dislike politics because of the corrupt leadership, nepotism and cronyism. Many vented a lot of anger over the 'inept and corrupt' politicians.

When they were asked if they were politically active most said 'No …'

… [I]nitially I tried being politically active however I feel that someone is always ready to take credit for what happens and use you for their own gains. (Student, HE institution, Lahore)
… [B]ecause our political leaders are not like the leaders, they are like the money gathering machine. (Student, private school, Lahore)

Many expressed the desire to do something for their country and address issues like inflation and load shedding, but felt an inability to be politically active:

'I want to see my country as a prosperous nation.' But when asked are you politically active? 'No, because it is unfortunate that there is no organisation in our country that can stimulate the youth to work for the betterment of the country and people are fed up with the inflation in the country, everybody thinks to become rich overnight and nobody cares to upgrade his nation.' (Student, TCF School, Lahore)

In some cases, leaving was seen as the better option. A 14-year-old expresses his aversion to politics:

Because the country has sunk into the deep black sea of political evils, competitions, and political wars. So I am not interested in it and will soon migrate. (Student, private school, Punjab)

Although a rare reaction in this survey, it reflects the results presented by Yusuf earlier in the paper about young people not seeing a future in their country and wanting to leave for the sake of a better life for themselves and their families.[18]

Most female madrassa students[19] believed that politics was for men alone – but one student reflected the general corrupt nature of politics, not linking it to her gender or religious upbringing and giving this as a reason for not being involved in politics:

> We are not active politically because in present day politics is all about corruption. Anyone who becomes a politician robs and cheats the country that causes misery for the public whereas we should work for the welfare of our country . . . (Student, female madrassa, Lahore)

It seems here that disengagement from politics stems largely from the perception of the corrupt nature of all political leaders. It indicates that these young people would rather disengage entirely from what they perceived to be a 'dirty' system. Implicit is the idea that they are striving to exist independent of the state, if they can.

Family connections and money

Beyond corruption, many of those surveyed believe that one cannot be successful in Pakistan's politics unless one has family connections or is part of a particular *biraderi*.[20] Nepotism and favouritism make it even more difficult for the youth to think of pursuing a career in politics or to be politically active. They believe that in order to run a successful election campaign and convince people to vote, one needs a lot of money.

> A common man does not have the required political affiliation or the constituency to win the election. (Student, HE institution, Lahore)

Politics is seen as a game of power.

> In this system one should get politically active when you are in a position to bring some change. (Student, private school, DG Khan)

When speaking about this theme, it was clear that the young people were not worried about the risk of disrupting the interconnected networks of mutual dependence and reciprocal relations that shape *biraderi* relations on the ground. They simply found that they could not break into the system.

Violence, risk and danger

They believe that to be involved in politics in Pakistan is risky, with threats to life and that of their family.

> large numbers of Pakistani continue to believe that elections are exercises in intimidation and outright fraud. [. . .] Under these circumstances frustration and insecurity lead many people to find solace and support in their sub-national allegiances – in the primordial group ecology of Pakistani society. (Weinbaum, 1996, p. 645)

Weinbaum's quote clearly states the general feeling of mistrust in the system. He also argues that conspiracies are a de-motivating element for people to exercise their participatory citizenship rights.

> Politics is too complicated for me, especially in Pakistan where every political step seems unjust and corrupt. (Student, private school, DG Khan)

Helplessness/disillusionment

All of the above results in disillusionment in the country's political system. A majority of them feel helpless that they cannot bring about a change and hence have lost interest in politics:

> . . . don't feel passionate about politics; I don't think that anything I can do could possibly make a difference. (Student, HE institution, Lahore)
>
> I want to make the nation better, but if we look around, we don't really have a medium that will make us active. Our system is corrupted. (Student, HE institution, Lahore)

It is likely that helplessness and disillusionment also develop into apathy.

Focus on studies, family responsibilities and time issues

Many believe that since they cannot make a difference, they should focus on their studies or career. University students say that they are not active mainly because of their academic commitments. Many do not see the relevance of politics in their lives. The political institutions are alien to them and their responsibilities are towards their families first and foremost.

> No I am not active politically because I don't know what's happening in politics. The game of politics is played in secret [behind the curtain] and I am not involved in such politics. (Student, Government Boys School, Sahiwal)
>
> I am a student, and a student has very limited time, and the awareness of this (political activism) is deteriorating due to the increasing workload from my school. (Student, Government Boys School, Sahiwal)

The lack of a role model

Some students mentioned the lack of role models who came from 'outside' the system. There is no one to emulate as most politicians come from political families whose fathers (or mothers) were politicians and groomed them into their role.

> Because the concept of politics in our country has become such that it is only something for the elite and not for those who realize the difficulties and problems

in the lives of the masses. Individuals who are not from political backgrounds are ignored. (Student, Government Boys School, Sahiwal)

I am not politically active because I belong to middle class family and my father is a government servant and we do not participate in political activities. (Student, Government Boys School, Sahiwal)

With the lack of faith in institutions, it is understandable that the youth do not want to participate through them. What is worse is that the institutions are often not even recognised or perceived as vehicles for participation.

To be or not to be … politically active (and what it actually means)

A minority of the remarks by the students surveyed are, in contrast, extremely positive and depicted their intent to make a difference for the country.

Yes, Pakistan is run by politicians and I believe that if I take part in politics, I will be proved beneficial. (Student, private school, Lahore)

A passionate student expressed his ambitions:

I really want to do something for my nation. I have the strength and the confidence to do so, but it will take some time. (Student, private school, DG Khan)

In rural areas and towns, people seemed more involved in politics as compared to the big cities. Young people in a small city in Southern Punjab, for example, said that they were actively involved in various campaigns. Some of these belong to political families, which means that they have a natural inclination towards politics, acquiring this aptitude as part of their grooming within the family. Some said that they were active as part of a forum or an NGO, while others cited social work as political activity. A 16-year-old is of the view:

Yes, I love politics, actually I am aware of the current affairs of a number of countries but I just love Pakistani politics because they are so much you know attractive. (Student, private school, DG Khan)

A minority of students do take part in political campaigns. With regard to university students, it was those who take political science courses who were the ones with more political awareness and were generally perceived as the 'politically active' lot.[21] Students who are politically active are also the ones who are part of political societies, the law and politics society or Amnesty International university chapters.

However, this begs the question of what political activity actually means for those who do profess to 'participate' beyond university clubs and societies. Most of those who classified themselves as politically active said that they are active because they watch political shows on TV and discuss it with their family or friends. They keep track of current affairs through electronic and print media, take part in political discussions or chose it as a subject for a degree programme. For most, being aware (through electronic or print media) of the country's politics is tantamount to being 'politically active'.

> Yes, I'm very much into politics. I watch political shows and am also interested in newspaper. I also discuss politics with my parents and colleagues. (Student, private school, Lahore)

This would not be classified as active if one goes by the definition offered above by Verba et al., as it does not try to affect or influence the behaviour of the government. The role of the media is clearly important and there have been great changes since Musharraf allowed more private media outlets to develop. Pakistan today has hundreds of channels and many broadcast political debates. However, in this case, political awareness (through the media) is confused with political activity and makes the point of just how bad the actual political disengagement is, that people do not even consider interfacing with political parties and structures an option when answering the question of how politically engaged they consider themselves. Again, hardly any one mentioned political institutions, and political activity is reduced to the passive act of watching TV and having an opinion (and possibly, discussing it with someone else). The students are therefore right at the very low level end of Khan's phases of youth participation (depicted in Figure 1).

Politics beyond the lawyers' movement and the hype of the youth vote in the 2013 elections

The hype around the 'youth vote' started with the Tehreek-e-Insaf's direct engagement with the youth after 2009. The main argument has been that in the 2013 elections, there would be a new generation of young Pakistani voters who had never been to the polls before and that they wanted change. Imran Khan's[22] PTI targeted youth participation by 'aiding them in their procurement of the party's membership'.[23] The Insaf Student Federation was set up as the official student wing of PTI with youth representatives from all five provinces.[24] Forums were set up on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter in order to encourage youth to use social media to participate and express their views. They raised debates on issues such as 'Rental Power Plants, the shortcomings in the education system and the environmental and
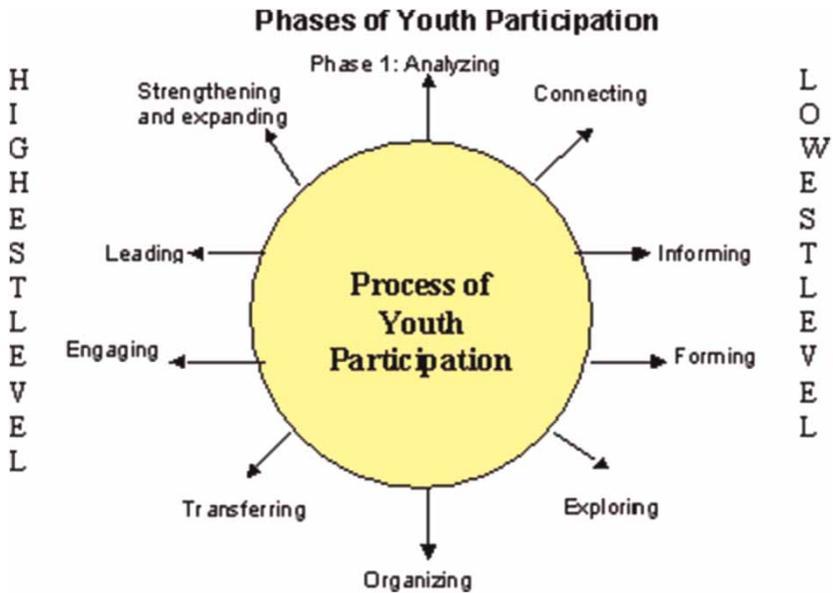
Phases of Youth Participation

Figure 1.   Khan's phases of youth participation.
Source: Khan (n.d., p. 4).

medical hazards in the country'[25] at the Youth Parliament. In the autumn of 2011, a rally in Lahore attracted 100,000 supporters, most of them young. This turnout, in the stronghold of Pakistan's chief opposition party, the PML(N) stunned politicians and analysts alike. The PTI's next rally in Karachi attracted a similar number of supporters. Since then, the PTI has been credited with re-engaging the youth in politics, and much of the media hype before and around the elections focused on the youth vote, and what role social media played in this re-engagement process.[26] However, according to Zaidi (2013), the media hype around the role of social media has been vastly overplayed and most of the debate on change took place within a social media bubble that bore little resemblance to reality.

In-depth research conducted by the British Council (BC) about how the young generation felt before the 2013 elections found that, on aggregate, young people in Pakistan were very pessimistic. The main issues remain inflation, lack of employment opportunities and issues pertaining to security and violence. Most importantly, the youth reported very low confidence in the official institutions, in particular the government, parliament and political parties, reflecting the research by Lall and Yusuf and showing that attitudes had not changed much when it comes to government institutions.[27] In addition, democracy does not seem to be the system of choice for many – 38 per cent expressed a preference for Islamic rule and 32 per cent would opt for military

rule, whilst only 29 per cent though that democracy was the best system for Pakistan (NGBB data pack national, slide 24). While disillusionment with the last five years certainly played a part in these opinions, one could also argue that the lack of understanding as to how the system works is largely at fault. This is reflected in the crux of the problem that remains voters' registration. The pre-election survey by the BC showed that only around 40 per cent of the young definitely planned to vote on the day (NGBB data pack national, slide 32). Of those who definitely did not plan to vote, 29 per cent were not registered and 5 per cent did not have a National Identity card. Another 19 per cent did not believe that the elections would make a difference and 13 per cent did not like the political parties or candidates (NGBB data pack national, slide 34). Overall, in the BC survey, there is little difference between urban and rural responses; only in rural areas, the number of those not voting because they are not registered or do not have an NI card goes up to 41 and 7 per cent, respectively (NGBB data pack rural, slide 34). This is despite the fact that the CNIC (computerised national identity card) process has made voters registration so much easier.[28] On the day of the elections, 16.88 million of the 85.42 million registered voters were aged under 26 and 12.73 million were aged under 30, that is, representing 34 per cent of a potential vote.[29] Actual voter turnout was 55.02 per cent – that is, 44.8 million voters. According to the Gallup (2013) exit polls, 11.2 million – that is 25 per cent –were from the 18–29 age group; however, we do not know exactly how many young people actually cast their vote. It looks like their turnout was proportionately smaller than that of other age groups, defying the media hype.[30]

Even if (according to the BC research) there are few differences between the attitudes of urban and rural youths, it is likely that there are stark differences between social classes. A random selection of 33 youths from working class and poor backgrounds in a Karachi slum and in a poor area in semi urban/rural Punjab in December 2012 had shown that although all who took part in the focus group to discuss citizenship were excited about Imran Khan and the PTI, none was actually registered to vote, less than six months before the elections. This shows that many of those who would have possibly voted for Imran Khan were not registered voters, underlining that the system is not recognised or understood. This again brings us back to the debate around active and passive political participation, as many in those focus groups felt that they were politically aware, but they did not feel either willing or able to go beyond the media debates. This could possibly be due to the fact that the last political campaign where the youth was engaged simply petered out. Many young people started to engage in politics during the anti-Musharraf campaign in 2007, which saw more than 100,000 people[31] on the street. The political movement – also known as the lawyers' movement – did not maintain its momentum after successfully ousting

General Musharraf from power and restoring the former chief justice back in the office. Once the limited aim was achieved, the lawyers went back to work and the students back to study. However, there were still bouts of public anger, such as the fury in 2010 about the government's slow response to the catastrophic floods across Pakistan. Between 2011 and 2012, due to frequent power outages and breakdowns, there were protests in different cities across Pakistan. These, however, do not translate into political activity – not even into anti–state movements.[32] According to Kugelman (2012), despite such anger and debate, a Pakistan anti-government revolt, such as the 2011 'Arab Spring' that helped to topple several long-ruling strongmen in the Middle East and North Africa, is highly unlikely. Whilst there is a charismatic figure in the form of Imran Khan who is able to tap into the 'widely nurtured grievances about corruption and injustice – all while embodying the clean, honest and non-dynastic qualities that elude most Pakistani politicians' (p. 3), the ethnic and religious fault lines are simply too big, as many Pakistanis see their superimposed ethnic and religious identities as more important than their Pakistani citizenship (Lall, 2012a; Yusuf, 2011). Besides this, there is already some sort of a democratic process in place. A revolution would have to be one against this system – not against a dictator or a long ruling family clan.

> In Pakistan … we get rid of our dictators every ten years or so … There is no 'regime' to overthrow … the first question is: an uprising against whom? […] And it is that question that strikes to the heart of the difference between Pakistan and Arab states that are currently facing political upheaval. The political landscape in the country is fundamentally different from that of the Arab states where uprisings are currently occurring, because while protesters in Tripoli, Sanaa, Manama, Cairo, Tunis and other cities were calling for dictators to be overthrown and free and fair elections to be held, Pakistan has no 'regime', and already holds elections. (Hashim, 2012, n.p.)

Kugelman (2012) also sees the role that patronage plays, reiterating Lyon and Lieven's ideas, and that many would hesitate to change the political order in a way that could threaten the structure they depend on for future influence. Although the young people did not mention this explicitly, their families would caution about too radical a change.[33] Neither does he believe that anger and alienation could translate into a youth-led, religion-based political movement, despite many young people being in general anti-government and anti-American, with a majority favouring an Islamic state and the Islamist political party known as Hizb-ut-Tahrir's growing influence.

> Polling in recent years finds that nearly two-thirds of young Pakistanis favour an Islamic state; more than 80% are at least moderately religious; and a full third support Sharia-style punishments such as floggings and the severing of limbs.

Overwhelming numbers identify themselves as Muslims rather than as Pakistanis. Such sentiments are not restricted to the poorer, less educated classes. (Kugelman, 2012, p. 4)

However, Pakistan's religious fault lines are as stark as the ethnic ones, with the concept of religious diversity rejected by many. The Islamic revolution promised by Munawar Hassan's Jamaat-i-Islami party has not brought in support at the polls and Islamic rule such as that of Maulvi Fazlullah, who ruled Swat when that region subjected to Sharia law was characterised by the kind of brutality that has cost him public support.

At the bottom of it all is the fact that Pakistan is a fragmented country – religiously, ethnically, across class and gender lines. Trust in public institutions remains a long way off and unfortunately, this has repercussions on political participation as many have expressed in the course of the research.

Conclusion

The article reviewed the issue of youth political participation in Pakistan in the light of the 2013 elections. Despite the excitement around the first democratic transition in Pakistan's history and the youth's thirst for change, there is an underlying issue when it comes to political participation. The article discusses the absence of 'political literacy' and how the state education system, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations have failed to help the youth understand the power of their vote and how the system works. In addition, the corrupt nature of politics in Pakistan is hindering the youth from performing their duties as good citizens and in helping their society to progress. The voices of the young people who were interviewed during the research bring to the fore some interesting insights – such as the fact that political participation is often seen as the passive role of watching TV and reading the news.

The article also discusses the fact that there is widespread alienation from the political process because of the not-altogether-inaccurate assessment that the 'democratic set-up' in Pakistan is merely a superstructure of a system that is still largely, at its base, feudal/client-patron. The lack of engagement is therefore for many a rational choice. However, while there is political alienation, there is no cultural alienation. Young people are not rejecting the country, just the state's conduct with them, and the opportunities it affords them.

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Notes

1. Fifty-nine per cent of Pakistan's population is below the age of 24 and, overall, over 67% of the population is under 30 (Yusuf, 2011).
2. In the absence of local bodies/governments and other organised setups, communities can only be reached through NGOs and philanthropic organisations. Often, this is driven by individuals who focus their energies on their local community – which is sometimes religiously or ethnically driven, but at other times just the local neighbourhood.
3. A part of the problem of formal politics in Pakistan is that 2013 was the first democratic transition after a government completed its term in office since independence in 1947. This means that voting is not necessarily seen as a means of affecting government action – unlike in India for example.
4. This article is not meant to be comparative; however, it is noteworthy that in two of Pakistan's neighbouring countries – Afghanistan and India, youth political participation and political literacy seem to be much higher.
   In Afghanistan, for example, nearly two thirds of all Afghans are under 25 and constituted the largest voting bloc in the April 2014 elections. According to Abdul Waheed Wafa, executive director of the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University, the young people were queuing to get their voter ID cards (Wendle, 2014). In India, the youth turned out in record numbers to vote in the April/ May 2014 elections. According to the Hindustan Times, 140 million more people turned up at the polling stations compared to the 2009 elections and many of these were from the youth (Chauhan, 2014).
5. Civics was taught as a separate subject in schools until the 1980s, along with History and Geography as separate subjects.
6. Recent research by Shams (2012) shows that the gross enrolment in the state education sector in the Punjab has dropped from 11.296 million in 2005–2006 to 10.679 million in 2009–2010; 32 out of 36 districts have lower enrolment figures in 2010 than in 2005 and there are also increased dropout rates from 32% in 2007 to 41% in 2009. On a district-by-district level, figures are even worse as 8 out of 36 districts have a <50% drop out rate (Shams, 2012). A large number of drop outs and the reduction of children in the state sector are due to an increase of children accessing private provision. In part, this is due to poorer families emulating the middle classes and choosing schools they feel better meet the needs of their children (Lall, 2012b); in part, there has been an active policy by the Punjab government to support families opting out of the state system by providing them with a certain amount of money to cover the fees.
7. http://www.youthparliament.pk/. The Youth Parliament was created: to engage youth in Pakistan in healthy discourse and expose them to the democratic process and practices, PILDAT launched the project of the first-ever Youth Parliament Pakistan in 2007. Members of Youth Parliament Pakistan are selected for duration of a year at a time. The first batch of Youth Parliament Pakistan was selected in 2007 and from thereon, Youth Parliament has had three batches so far including 2007 batch, 2008–2009 batch and 2009–2010 batch. This is not

the only Youth Parliament – see http://www.pkhope.com/youth-ambassador-of-geo-jang-sms-registration-ali-moeen-nawazish/.

8. The PTI promised 25% of all parliamentary tickets at the national and provincial levels to the youth – which is also why it is seen as the most pro-youth party.

9. PILDAT (2012, p. 3).

- Youth should come up with a united front, irrespective of what party they support, to campaign for the trust of people on the elections.
- Youth, particularly students, should campaign at different levels to help people realise the power of their vote.
- Groups of students should persuade other students within their institutions to cast vote on the day of polling.
- Since youngsters are enthusiastic, they should encourage their families to go to cast vote on the day of voting.

10. These ideologies were led by mainstream political parties and student unions were an extension of these parties operating at the university level – Jamiat was the militant student wing of the mainstream political party Jamat-e-Islami present in almost every university across Pakistan. The Mohajir Student Front was the student wing of Muttahida Qaumi Movement at Karachi University and similarly, Peoples' Student Federation represented the Pakistan Peoples Party.

11. Political parties engaging students have completely misused them in the past, destroying academic culture by creating issues of discipline in colleges and universities.

12. There is a difference between rural and urban youth which the fieldwork revealed and is discussed later. It seem that the data Khan refers to are largely taken from urban areas as the youth in the rural areas are actively involved in politics, pursuing local MPs, getting involved in mobilisation and demonstrations.

13. These figures also include the deaths of security forces operating in Swat and South Waziristan.

14. One school was located in a Karachi slum and one school was located in a semi-urban area in Punjab.

15. The questions asked on the survey were: 'How politically aware are you?' and 'How politically active are you?' This was followed by a section where respondents were asked to elaborate on what they understood by being 'politically active'.

16. Government, private, philanthropic, madrassa or higher education institution.

17. In the female madrassa, almost all girls said that they saw politics as a man's responsibility and wanted no part in it; in the male madrassa, many boys said that they had a preference for a military government.

18. See also http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/01-Apr-2011/Quit-Pakistan-syndrome-growing; http://pkonweb.com/2012/05/pm-gilani-to-pakistanis-why-dont-they-leave-whos-stopping-them/.

19. Madrassas lie at the low end of the political activity spectrum. Students there are of the view that if they study in a madrassa, their entire interest should be in religion. Many said that they are also aware of worldly events because social science and religion are both compulsory. But they see politics as a completely worldly thing and believe that in the 'early era' governments were run without politics. With the increasing numbers of young people of all classes attending

secondary madrassas, these attitudes indeed show a worrying trend of political disengagement.

20. 'biraderi' – clans, tribes, castes, sects, which are all crucial to Pakistani politics.

21. In general, families prefer their children not to go into social sciences due to lack of careers. Families prefer their children to study maths, engineering, medicine and other science-related subjects.

22. Imran Khan, Pakistan's former cricket captain, comes from outside the traditional political establishment; however, he is part of the elite. He is seen as having delivered on two counts: cricket and building a cancer hospital in his mother's memory; this has given him credibility on the political scene.

23. Khan (2012).

24. However, the student President of the ISF was killed in an act of target killing; so, this only confirms the fears of the youth that being a part of politics is risky business. Retrieved May 22, 2012, from http://www.defence.pk/forums/national-political-issues/129729-waseem-baloch-killed-pti-isf.html.

25. PTI's official website. Retrieved May 22, 2012, from http://www.insaf.pk/Forum/tabid/53/forumid/42/tpage/1/view/topic/postid/83416/Default.aspx#83416.

26. See, for example:
    http://www.upi.com/UPI-Next/2013/05/09/Pakistani-Youth-Vote-Could-be-Critical-Analysts-Say/31364154611953/; http://tribune.com.pk/story/530330/election-2013-the-youth-vote/; http://tribune.com.pk/story/546292/to-vote-or-not-to-vote-will-the-youth-decide-the-countrys-future/; http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201305080011-0022739; http://tribune.com.pk/story/530330/election-2013-the-youth-vote/; http://dawn.com/2013/04/12/the-youth-vote-more-hype-than-reality/; http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/editors-picks/03-Apr-2013/pakistan-s-youth-vote-explained; http://dawn.com/2013/03/20/youth-to-play-deciding-role-in-upcoming-elections-shows-ecp-data/; http://www.nation.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2013-05-12/page-22/detail-4.

27. National Government – 71% rated unfavourablyNational Assembly – 67% rated unfavourablyPolitical Parties – 69% rated unfavourablyBritish Council NGBB data pack, slide 13.

28. A CNIC applicant is required to produce the following documents at the time of application: Birth Certificate or Old NIC or Matriculation Certificate or CNICs of immediate/blood relatives Citizenship certificate issued by Ministry of Interior (http://www.nadra.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=9).

29. http://ecp.gov.pk/Misc?GE-2013_Graphs/05_national_assembly_turnouts.jpg; www.dawn.com/news/796759/youth-to-play-eciding-role-in-upcoming-eleftions-shows-ecp-data.

30. Voting data by age are not consolidated centrally. Age-specific data are kept in each district separately.

31. Dawn newspaper archives for 24 September 2007. Retrieved May 22, 2012, from http://archives.dawn.com/2007/09/24/welcome.htm.

32. Because these are not organised protests as such and people, mostly poor, gather on their own with no one leading them.

33. One can argue that Nawar Sharif's win in the May 2013 elections underlines this point. Many wanted change, but were equally reluctant to give it to the PTI who they see as inexperienced.

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