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Post-election Analysis

PAKISTAN

The political return of Nawaz Sharif

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First published (in Spanish): 19 May 2013

This report was made possible thanks to funding from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID).



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Taller de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos

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The May 11 elections were contradictory: the results were both predictable and unpredictable. Nawaz Sharif and his Muslim League (PML-N) had been projected to win - although only around 70 seats - which might have forced them into a coalition government. Imran Khan's party, the Justice Movement (*Pakistan Tehrik-e Insaaf*, PTI) had been bandied about as a viable coalition partner, given that both parties place themselves on the conservative right. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was expected to obtain second place, followed at some distance by the PTI, which would become the third largest party. The total votes in percentages were as follows: PML-N 35%, PTI 17.8%, PPP 15.7%, MQM 5.6%, PML-Q 3.2%, JUI-F 2.9%, PML-F 2.2% and JI 1.6%.

In the absence of an absolute majority, it was feared that a coalition government would lead to a dysfunctional parliament, with parties at loggerheads and a difficult coexistence between the national and the provincial assemblies. Several of Khan's declarations against forming part of a coalition with other parties, raised questions about the difficulty of forming a government and having a stable legislature.

The biggest surprise was the large number of votes won by Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League. In principle, if the independent MPs back the winning party as usual, Sharif will be able to comfortably form a government. Another surprise, as the list of results published on 16 May reveal¹, is that the PTI almost equaled the PPP in terms of seats won. In fact, on more than one occasion during the vote-counting and the seat projections carried out on election night, the PTI appeared to be the country's second political force, ahead of the PPP and even, at times rivalling the PML-N in terms of seats.

Nobody expected Sharif to sweep the board as he did, increasing his seats from 90 in 2008 to the 124 it has won so far. PML-N really does lend credence to the saying 'the party that wins Punjab wins the national assembly'. The party sustained its near or total absence from other provinces and instead strengthened its position in Punjab. Winning 214 of the 297 seats in Punjab's Assembly (up from 165 in 2008) after five years of Shahbaz Sharif (Nawaz's brother) in government, also has merit.

The PPP's slump was also unexpected – it dropped from 120 seats in 2008 to 31 in 2013. One of the more serious consequences for the PPP is the fact it has lost its presence in two provinces (Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) where until now it had a solid base of support. Its influence in Punjab has been reduced to a minimum (especially in the south, where it won its biggest support in 2008) with just two seats (down from 61). Its presence has been limited to its Sindhi fiefdom where it lost five seats. At provincial level, it also lost control of the Sindhi Assembly, dropping from the 88 seats it won in 2008 to 65.

¹ Data from the Pakistan Election Commission. There are still eleven seats left to assign. In five of them the results have been postponed or cancelled. In the other six districts elections have yet to be held.

Provisional Results

	FATA	Islamabad	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Total
PML-N	1	1	4	116	1	1	124
PPP	0	0	0	2	29	0	31
PTI	1	1	17	8	0	0	27
MQM	0	0	0	0	18	0	18
JUI-F	1	0	6	0	0	3	10
PML-F	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
PMAP	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
JI	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
NPP	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
LMP-Q	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
ANP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
BNP	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
QWP-S	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
PML-Z	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
NP	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
AMLP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
AJIP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
APML	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
IND	6	0	1	16	1	4	28
TOTAL	9	2	35	146	56	13	261

The PTI started from scratch, having boycotted the 2008 election, and won the third largest share of seats. However, many had believed that Khan would win these elections, due to the large mobilisations in his favour. The party suffered two setbacks. Firstly, the tsunami that Khan claimed was about to wash across Pakistan was the PML-N's and not his. Secondly, his emphasis on corruption among politicians turned out to be a miscalculation. Pakistanis voted in their majority for known faces – who, while not unconnected with corruption scandals, have far more economic experience, which is an issue that worries the population more. Besides, the youth vote is not the only vote that counts. While it is true that many parties neglect the growing number of youth and urban voters who are disenchanted with traditional politics, there are still more not-so-young voters worried less about corruption and more about motorways – such as those built by Nawaz during his last term in office – as well as about trade, the economy and stability. Where the PTI did best is in Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa where it hopes to form a government in that province's Provincial Assembly.

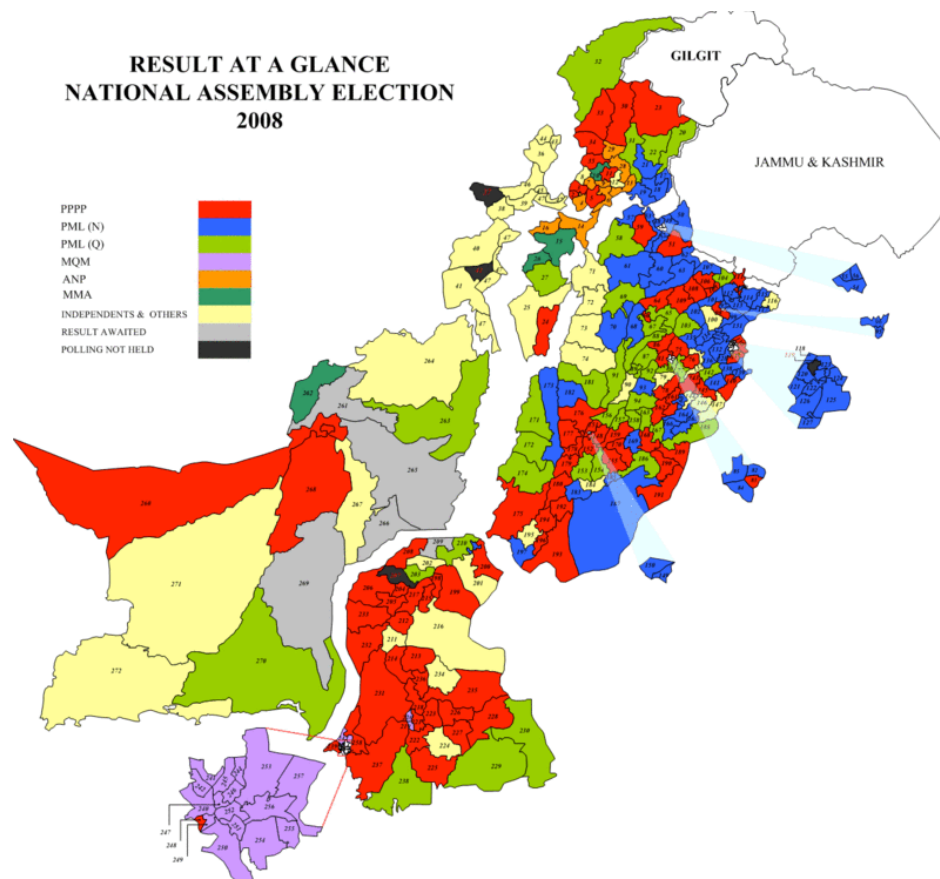
Another painful electoral defeat was that of the *Awami National Party*, (ANP), which alongside the PPP was the biggest winner in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in 2008. Its share of seats there has dropped from 13 in the National Assembly and 46 in the Provincial Assembly that year, to just 1 in the National and 4 in the Provincial Assembly this time. It is unknown to what extent voter disillusionment, the terrible attacks carried out by the Pakistani Taliban Movement (*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan*, TTP) which carried out a sinister campaign against the party, or the PTI's rise, can explain this party's disaster in its Pashtun fiefdom.

The United National Movement (*Muttahida Qaumi Movement*, MQM) also suffered a setback at the polls, going from 25 to 18 seats in the National Assembly and from 51 to 37 in the Provincial Assembly of Sindh. The party

retains its control of the city of Karachi, but there is no doubt that the TTP's attacks have also taken a toll on this party.

Lastly, it is worth underlining the ongoing poor results of the Islamist parties, which continue to have parliamentary representation but seem incapable of obtaining a high number of votes. *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JI) which boycotted the 2008 elections won 3 seats in the National Assembly and 8 in the provincial chambers (7 in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and 1 in Punjab), while Fazal Rehman's *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI-F), which won 6 seats in the National Assembly in 2008 as part of a coalition (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, MMA, United Council of Action – now defunct) climbed to 10 seats this time, but saw its 26 seats in the provincial assemblies fall to 19 (13 in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and 6 in Balochistan).

The most notable trend in these elections is that the provinces continue to vote for their own interests. None of the parties are national or have a vision for the whole country. The PTI's arrival bears witness to this trend: its rhetoric has attracted the Pashtun population more than the rest. The following maps are proof. In the 2008 elections the PPP was the only party capable of presenting a vision for the whole country.



Source: <http://c4choice.blogspot.com.es/2013/03/result-at-a-glance-national-assembly.html>

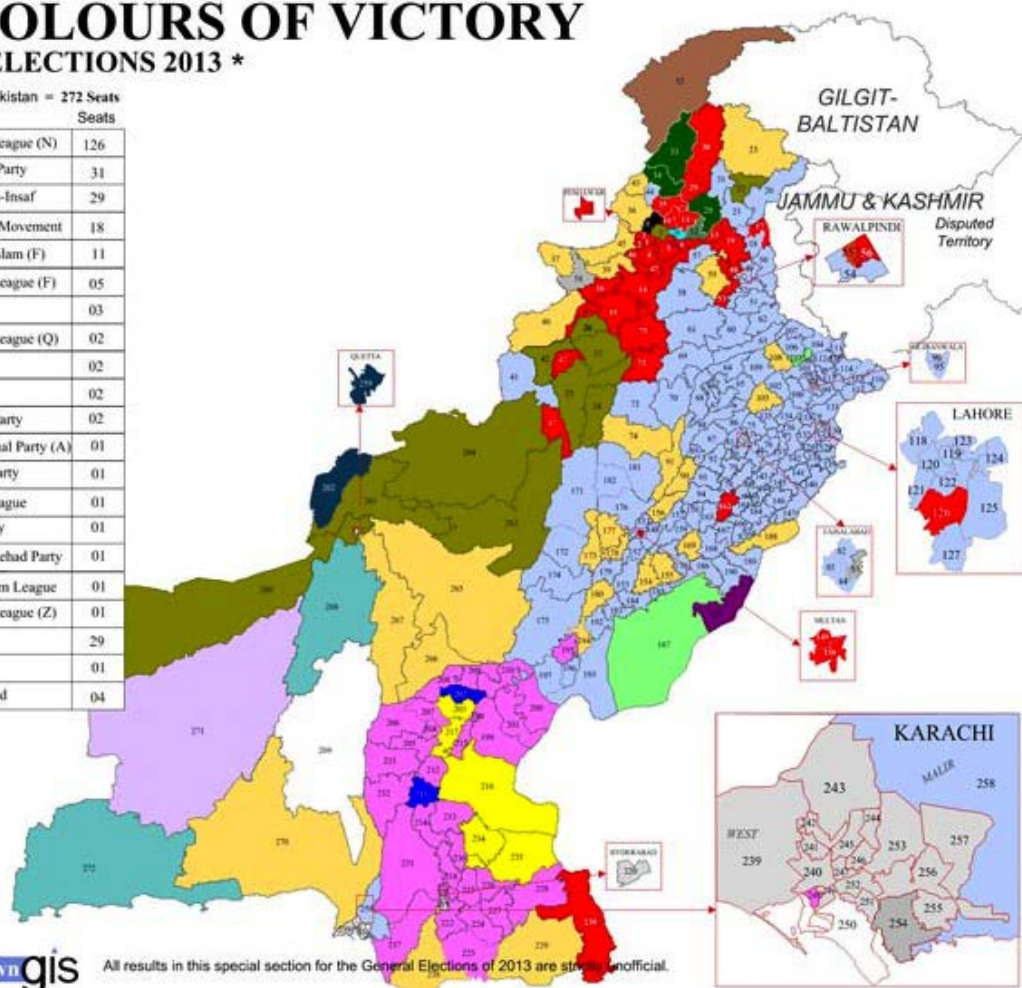
The PPP's red shading can be seen on the 2008 map across the entire country while the PML-N's blue is limited to Punjab, and, in green, the *Quaid e*

Azam Muslim League (PML-Q) (the party created by Pervez Musharraf in 2002), is also present nationally. In 2013 however, almost every province can be distinguished by its colours. In blue, PML-N dominated Punjab; in pink, PPP-governed Sindh; the PTI's red dominates Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, while independents and nationalist parties are prevalent in Balochistan. Among the Islamist parties, JUI-F and JI have their greatest following in Pashtun areas (including northern Balochistan which is majority Pashtun). Karachi remains a MQM fiefdom while the Q League only won seats in the Punjabi district of Bahawalpur. It is curious to note that the All Pakistan Muslim League – the party founded by Musharraf – won two seats (nationally and provincially) in Chitral (the brown shading on the 2013 map), despite the fact that the party had withdrawn from the elections in protest at the arrest and disqualification of its leader.

THE COLOURS OF VICTORY GENERAL ELECTIONS 2013 *

National Assembly of Pakistan = 272 Seats

Political PARTY	Seats
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	126
Pakistan Peoples Party	31
Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf	29
Muttedha Qaumi Movement	18
Jamiate Ulema-e-Islam (F)	11
Pakistan Muslim League (F)	05
Jamaat-e-Islami	03
Pakistan Muslim League (Q)	02
PKMAP	02
National Party	02
National Peoples Party	02
Balochistan National Party (A)	01
Awami National Party	01
Awami Muslim League	01
Qaumi Watan Party	01
Awami Jambori Ittehad Party	01
All Pakistan Muslim League	01
Pakistan Muslim League (Z)	01
Independent	29
Result awaited	01
Elections postponed	04



Source: Dawn News