

### IRI INDEX III: Issues

In IRI’s previous surveys, “pocket book” issues have been cited by voters as the most important problems facing Pakistan. That trend continued in this survey as well. Respondents were asked how important each of a series of issues would be in determining for which party they would cast their vote in the next election. While all of the issues are rated importantly, the economic issues receive a much higher intensity of responses than do the non-economic issues:

“When it comes to casting your vote in the next election, how important are each of the following issues in deciding which party you will vote for; very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all?”

	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Not important at all</b>	<b>DK</b>
Inflation	92.3%	3.7%	2.3%	1.2%	.6%
Poverty	85.6%	7.2%	4.5%	1.6%	1.1%
Unemployment	85.3%	9.9%	2.4%	1.6%	.8%
Education	83.8%	8.8%	4.1%	2%	1.4%
Water	76.8%	14.5%	5.3%	2.1%	1.3%
Electricity	74.2%	15.4%	6%	2.7%	1.8%
Healthcare	70.8%	20.4%	4%	2.6%	2.2%
Roads	69.9%	19.4%	5.8%	3%	2%
Terrorism	52.3%	23.4%	11.4%	7.6%	5.2%
Corruption	47.8%	30.7%	9.5%	5.6%	6.4%
Province Autonomy	38.9%	28.7%	11.9%	6.2%	14.3%
Musharraf Resigning from Army	36.4%	24%	11.8%	13.2%	14.5%
Democratic Reform	36.3%	31.4%	11.6%	6.4%	14.3%

The government gets generally high marks on the issues people care about the most, with 61 percent saying that it did a “very good” or “good” job.

“On the issues most important to you how has the Government performed?”

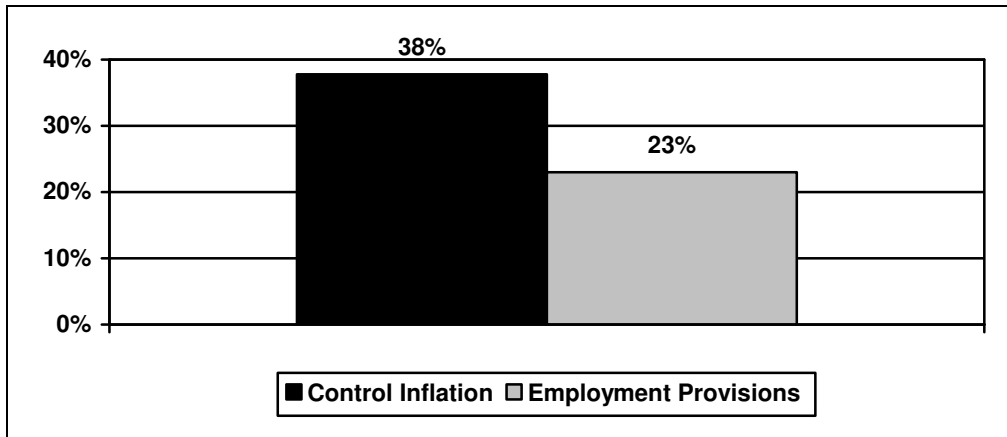
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>	<b>No Response</b>
23.2%	38%	14.6%	19%	4.3%	.9%

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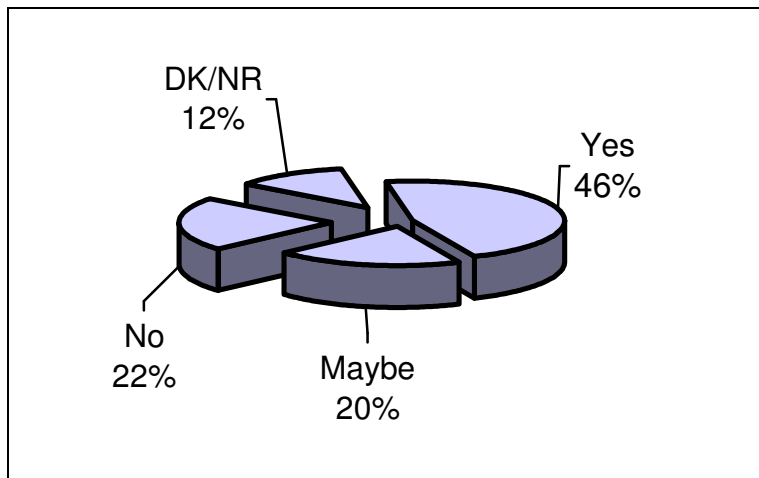
With economic concerns of paramount importance, IRI asked those polled what action they would like to see from the government to improve their economic condition. Control inflation was by far the most common response:

In terms of improving your economic situation, what kind of action would you like to see from the government?



The predominance of economic issues and the role they will play in the upcoming election was evident when voters were asked if they would support a party that promised to stop price hikes. Forty-six percent replied “yes,” and another 20 percent replied “maybe.”

“If a political party pledged to stop the price hikes, would you vote for this party?”



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In exploring other issues, IRI asked voters the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with certain statements. Among the findings was that Pakistanis believe that provincial autonomy will strengthen the federation, that the Pakistan/Afghanistan border should be fenced, that the government has done a good job in assisting earthquake victims, and that the Women’s Protection Bill was a step in the right direction. On the issue of fencing the border, the highest support came from Punjab and Sindh, while NWFP and Balochistan trailed behind:

“Now we are going to ask you your level of agreement or disagreement to various statements or your position on various issues:”

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>DK</b>
More provincial autonomy will strengthen the federation	38.1%	32.2%	9.9%	6.5%	13.3%
The Pakistan/Afghanistan border should be fenced	46.2%	21.2%	10.5%	11.1%	11%
The government has done a good job helping earthquake victims	43.3%	29.8%	13.2%	6.5%	7.2%
The Women’s Protection Bill is a step in the right direction to protect women	17.8%	21.8%	14.8%	28.2%	17.4%

#### Fencing the Pakistan/Afghanistan border: Province Breakdown

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Punjab</b>	<b>NWFP</b>	<b>Sindh</b>	<b>Balochistan</b>
Agree	67%	68%	64%	74%	39%
Disagree	22%	22%	30%	13%	32%
DK/NR	11%	10%	7%	13%	30%

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IRI's survey data from June 2006 and September 2006 expressed an improving attitude on the part of Pakistanis that things were moving in a more positive direction; optimism increased by five percent (from 38% to 43%) along with a two percent decrease in pessimism (from 46% to 44%). These numbers are essentially unchanged in IRI's March 2007 survey. In a province by province breakdown, "right direction" responses were highest in Punjab and Balochistan, and lowest in the NWFP and Sindh

"Would you say that things in Pakistan are heading in the right direction in the wrong direction?"

RESPONSE	Jun-06	Sep-06	Mar-07
Wrong direction	46%	44%	44.1%
Right direction	38%	43%	42.7%
DK/NR	16%	13%	13.2%

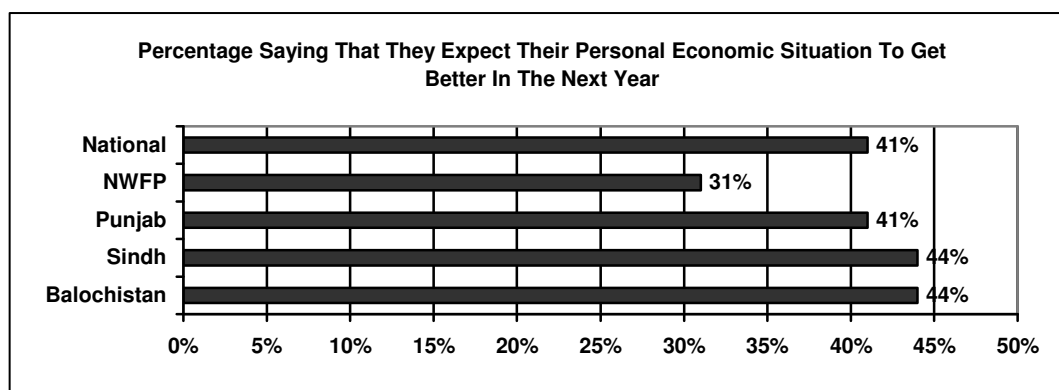
Punjab	Jun-06	Sep-06	Mar-07
Wrong direction	45.3%	39.3%	40%
Right direction	36.9%	50.4%	48.5%
DK/NR	17.8%	10.3%	11.4%

NWFP	Jun-06	Sep-06	Mar-07
Wrong direction	38.8%	39%	50.8%
Right direction	34.8%	34.9%	28.7%
DK/NR	26.4%	26%	20.5%

Sindh	Jun-06	Sep-06	Mar-07
Wrong direction	47.3%	51.3%	51.5%
Right direction	46.9%	37%	34.9%
DK/NR	5.8%	11.7%	13.6%

Balochistan	Jun-06	Sep-06	Mar-07
Wrong direction	68%	78.2%	38.5%
Right direction	23%	14.5%	50.5%
DK/NR	9%	7.3%	11%

The negative attitude towards the direction of Pakistan does not necessarily extend to economic outlook. When asked about Pakistan's future economic prospects, there is a very significant change toward the positive. Since the June 2006 survey, there has been a continuing improvement in how respondents view the future economic outlook of Pakistan. Currently, those with an optimistic outlook are 11 percent higher than they were in June 2006, with more than four of every 10 respondents reporting that the economic situation in Pakistan will "get better" in the next year. At 41 percent, this represents a seven percent increase in the same response from September 2006. Less than one-seventh (14%) believe things will "get worse;" a decline of four percent since September 2006 survey. An additional 15 percent expect the economic situation to "remain the same" (a 13% decrease from September 2006) and just less than one in three (30%) respond with a "don't know" or "not able to respond" answer. Optimism was highest in Balochistan and Sindh, and lowest in NWFP:

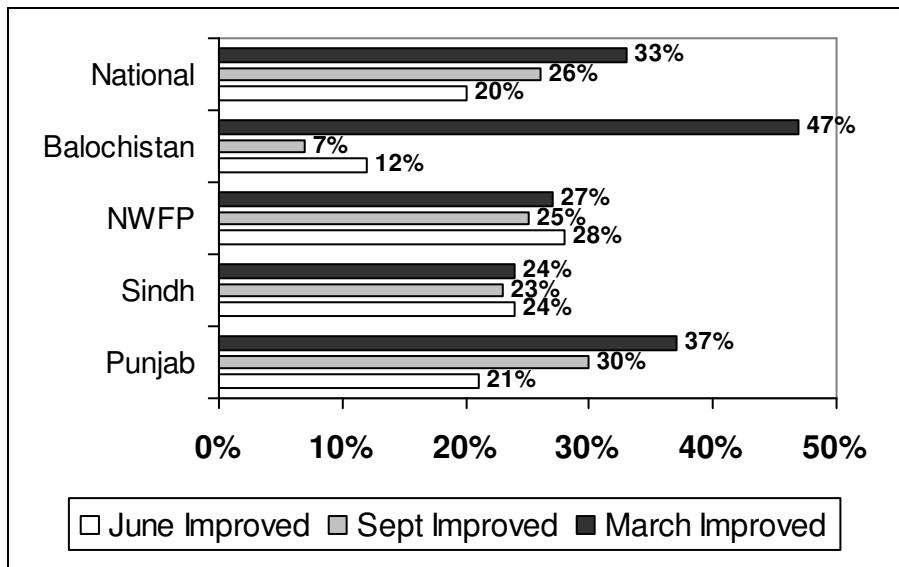


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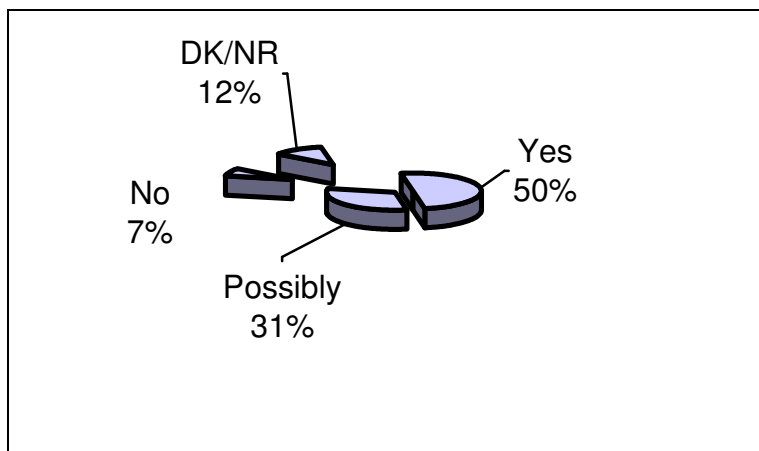
Fueling these rising levels of economic optimism and underpinning the stability of the country’s current direction is the fact that Pakistanis report that, since the last election, their personal economic situation has improved. Currently, one-third of the respondents in this survey (33%) claim that their economic situation has improved since the last parliamentary elections; this represents an increase of 13 percent since the survey in June 2006. Likewise there has been a substantive decrease in those seeing a worsening personal economic situation down from 45 percent in June 2006; now at 30 percent:

“In the past year has your personal economic situation improved, worsened or stayed the same?”



In the September 2006 poll, 45 percent of respondents stated that they believed that Pakistan was making progress in its transition to democracy. In the March 2007 survey, people were asked if they felt that democracy would make their lives better. One-half of the sample believed that democracy would improve their lives, and an additional one-third said it was possible. Only seven percent said that democracy would not make their lives any better.

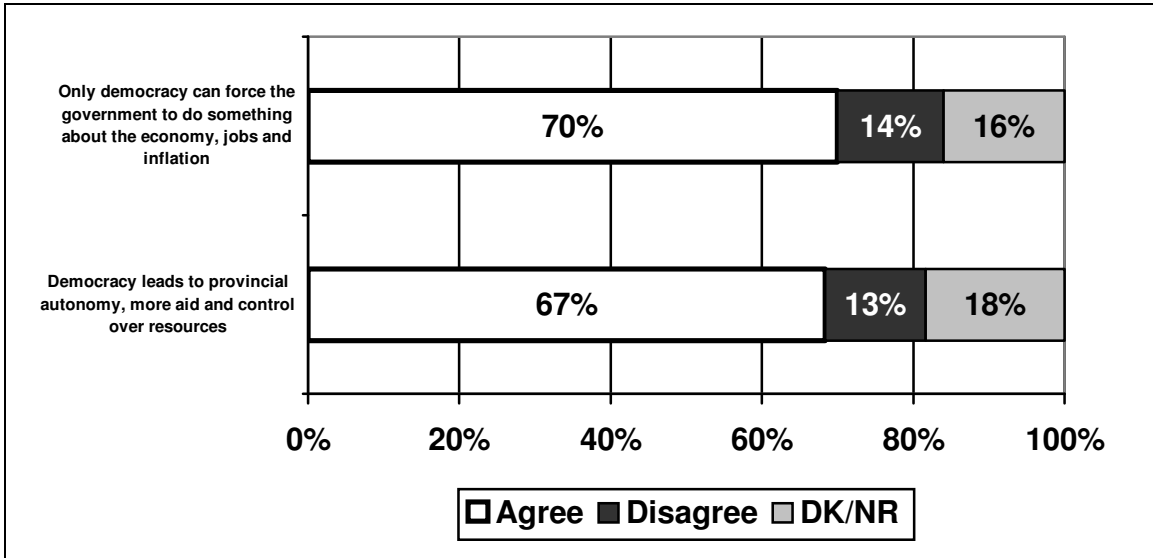
“Do you believe that democracy will better your life?”



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Voters were then asked to if they agreed or disagreed with two statements regarding the potential benefits of establishing democracy in Pakistan. The first statement dealt with whether democracy would force the government to improve its efforts in creating jobs and growing the economy, and the second asked whether democratic reforms will increase the ability of the provincial authorities to gain more aid from the central government aid and exercise more control over local resources. In both cases, overwhelming majorities of respondents agreed that these outcomes will occur under a democratic system:



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