

PAKISTAN'S DEMOCRACY AND ROLE OF EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the European Union (EU)'s role in building and strengthening democratic institutions in Pakistan. It examines the concept of diffuse democracy and its applicability to the EU's structure and investigates the accountability mechanisms implemented by the EU. Additionally, the article analyzes the demand for more democratic control and accountability in Western democracies and explores whether the EU has developed a new model of democracy known as "diffuse democracy." In recent years, there has been a growing demand for more democratic control and accountability in western democracies. This demand has led to an increase in mechanisms of control over political bodies and institutions, as well as a diversification of these mechanisms. The EU is at the forefront of these changes, with many policy-makers and scholars believing that it is leading to a renewal of democracy. However, as the EU is not a state and does not have classic institutional devices such as parliamentary or presidential regimes, it relies on diffuse mechanisms of democratic control. These mechanisms, while not efficient enough to be considered fully democratic, aim to promote democratic values and principles in Pakistan. EU has been making efforts to build and strengthen democratic institutions in Pakistan, a country in its developmental phase. These efforts include supporting the establishment of independent judiciaries, upholding the rule of law, and promoting public awareness and support for political matters. The EU's approach to building democratic institutions in Pakistan aligns with the concept of diffuse democracy, which emphasizes accountability mechanisms and democratic control over political bodies.

Keywords: Diffuse Democracy, Strengthening of Democratic Institutions, Development, European Union

INTRODUCTION

The European Union plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting democratization efforts both within its member states and beyond. EU assistance has been instrumental in helping countries transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems, providing financial aid, technical expertise, and political support. The EU's commitment to democratization is reflected in its enlargement policy, which sets out clear criteria for aspiring member states to meet in terms of democratic governance and respect for human rights. Furthermore, the EU actively engages in democracy promotion through its diplomatic efforts and partnerships with international organizations such as the United Nations. The EU's civilian capabilities, including its missions in third countries, also contribute to democratization by supporting the establishment of credible police forces and promoting the rule of law (Blair et al., 2023). In addition, the EU recognizes that democracy and stability are closely intertwined with security. Therefore, the EU has also taken steps to enhance its security capabilities, including the creation of the European Defense Fund to strengthen its defense capabilities in order to better deter and respond to external threats. The EU's commitment to democratization is not only limited to its member states but extends beyond its borders. The European Union plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting democratization efforts both within its member states and beyond. EU assistance has been instrumental in helping countries transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems, providing financial aid, technical expertise, and political support (Burlyuk et al., 2024).

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Challenges of Democratization in Pakistan

The strength and effectiveness of a democracy depend on the robustness of its democratic institutions. In the case of Pakistan, there have been several challenges and weaknesses in the development of democratic institutions, which have hindered the consolidation and stability of democracy in the country. One of the main challenges to democracy in Pakistan is the lack of autonomy and independence of democratic institutions. While Pakistan officially operates under a democratic system, the reality on the ground reveals a weak democracy characterized by power struggles, political interference, and limited accountability. This is evident in the various military coups and frequent changes in government that Pakistan has witnessed. During the 1990s, there was a movement in Pakistan that aimed to foster indigenous and popular participation in public life. This movement had some success in influencing government policies and becoming a contender in power struggles (Zámosc, 2007). However, the movement's involvement in a coup attempt demonstrated that its political socialization had not nurtured a sense of commitment to democracy. This highlights the complexity of civil society actors and their contributions to democracy. Furthermore, the weak democratic institutions in Pakistan have also contributed to a lack of checks and balances, which undermines the functioning of democracy. Additionally, the lack of effective governance and development initiatives has further weakened democracy in Pakistan. There is a crisis of governance in Pakistan, as stated by the World Bank. This crisis has affected the quality and quantity of public utilities provided at the local level, with bureaucratic institutions becoming centralized and community-based organizations relegated and made irrelevant in the decision-making process. Despite some efforts to promote democracy, such as the implementation of Panchayati Raj institutions and the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the reality on the ground is that there are still significant challenges and weaknesses in Pakistan's democratic institutions.

These weaknesses include the lack of support for women empowerment and limited participation of marginalized groups in local governance. Pakistan's weak democracy and democratic institutions have hindered the consolidation and stability of democracy in the country (Imran et al., 2023). One of the main challenges to democracy in Pakistan is the lack of autonomy and independence of democratic institutions. This is due to political interference and a lack of accountability, which erode public trust in these institutions. Furthermore, the slow reform of the justice system and lack of financial resources in rural regions have also contributed to a weak democracy in Pakistan (Zia, 2023). These factors have led to a lack of confidence in the judicial apparatus and the police, resulting in people taking the law into their own hands. This weakens the rule of law and further undermines democratic institutions. The weak

democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan can be attributed to a combination of factors such as political interference, lack of accountability, limited participation of marginalized groups, lack of financial resources, and slow justice system reform. These factors have created a vicious cycle where weak democratic institutions lead to ineffective governance and development initiatives, which in turn further weaken democracy. In addition, the lack of commitment to democracy among civil society actors in Pakistan has also affected the strength of democratic institutions.

While civil society in Pakistan has played a crucial role in influencing government policies and fostering popular participation in public life, the lack of a strong commitment to democracy among these actors has hindered the consolidation of democracy (Shah et al., 2023). The weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan have significant implications for the country's governance and socio-economic development. The weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan have hindered the establishment of effective governance and equitable representation. This has resulted in a lack of inclusivity and empowerment, particularly for marginalized groups and women. These groups, who often face discrimination and marginalization, struggle to have their voices heard and their needs addressed in the decision-making process. Analyzing the sources provided, it is clear that Pakistan suffers from weak democracy and democratic institutions due to various interconnected factors (Rasool, 2023). This includes political interference and a lack of accountability, which erodes public trust in these institutions. Additionally, the lack of financial resources, especially in rural regions, further hampers the reform of the justice system and undermines access to justice. Furthermore, the low quality and integrity of the judicial apparatus, including corruption issues, contribute to the overall weak democratic institutions in Pakistan. Furthermore, the lack of social and economic networks that could function as substitutes for law add to the underdevelopment of institutions necessary for fostering impersonal relations between individuals and promoting the rule of law (Commissioner, 2023). These weak democratic institutions have led to a crisis of governance in Pakistan, where the provision of public utilities at the local level is inadequate.

This lack of effective governance and development initiatives exacerbates the existing weaknesses within the democratic system, further undermining its effectiveness (Popoola, 2013). Moreover, the limited involvement of Community-Based Organizations in local governance contributes to the weak democracy in Pakistan. The lack of inclusion and empowerment of marginalized groups and women also contributes to the weak democracy in Pakistan (Irshad et al., 2023). Statistically, the weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan are reflected in key indicators. For example, according to the World Bank, Pakistan's voice and accountability index, which measures citizens' perceptions of the extent to which they can participate in decision-making processes and hold the government accountable, is relatively low. This indicates a lack of inclusivity and participation in the democratic process. Furthermore, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Pakistan as one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

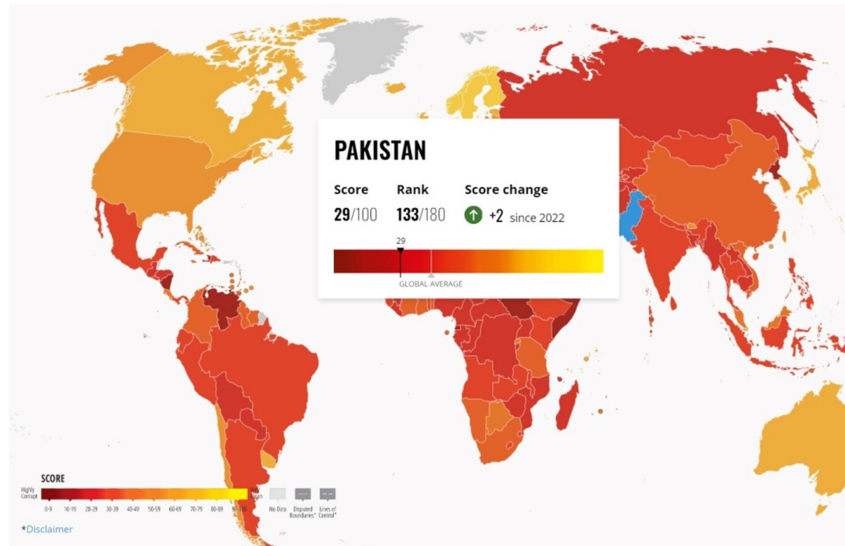


Figure 1: Improvement in Pakistan Ranking on Corruption Perception

(Source: <https://augaf.com/pakistans-ranking-improves-on-corruption-perception-index-in-2023/>)

Score changes 2012 - 2023

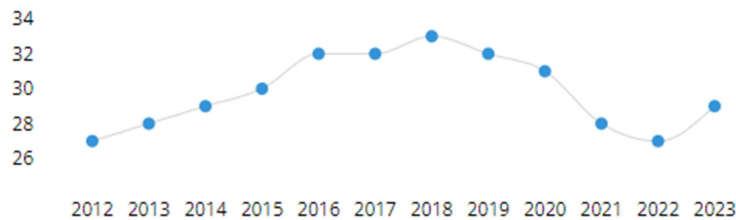


Figure 2: Scores for Improvement in Pakistan Ranking on Corruption Perception

(Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1809740>)

This demonstrates the presence of corruption within the democratic institutions, which undermines their legitimacy and effectiveness. Furthermore, data from the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index highlights the challenges in the judicial system in Pakistan. For example, Pakistan ranks low in terms of factors such as limited access to justice, the absence of corruption in the judiciary, and ineffective enforcement of laws and regulations. These statistics further support the notion that weak democratic institutions and a lack of effective governance contribute to the challenges faced by Pakistan. Analyzing the sources provided, it becomes evident that Pakistan faces significant challenges in its democratic institutions. The slow reform of the justice system in Pakistan, coupled with a lack of financial resources and a loss of public confidence in the judicial apparatus, has led to a situation where justice is virtually non-existent in many rural regions of the country (Karmakar, 2023). This further weakens the democratic system as access to justice is a fundamental pillar of democracy. The lack of community participation in the budgetary process also reflects the weak democracy in Pakistan. Community participation in the budgetary process is a crucial aspect of democratic governance, as it ensures that the priorities and needs of the community are considered in decision-making processes.

To address the weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan, it is essential to focus on several key areas. Firstly, efforts should be made to enhance transparency and accountability in the decision-making processes. This could be done through measures such as strengthening anti-corruption laws and institutions, promoting greater transparency in government operations, and ensuring mechanisms for citizen participation and oversight in the decision-making process. Additionally, there is a need to prioritize judicial reform in order to improve the quality and integrity of the judicial apparatus (Abiyoso, 2018). This can be achieved by investing in the capacity building of the judicial system, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and addressing issues of corruption within the judiciary and improving access to justice for all citizens (Baskoro et al., 2018). The weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan present significant challenges, as highlighted by the sources provided. The slow reform of the justice system, lack of financial resources, and loss of public confidence in the judiciary all contribute to a weak democracy in Pakistan. Furthermore, the lack of community participation in the budgetary process and the relegation of Community-Based Organizations further undermine democratic governance in the country. To address these challenges, the government of Pakistan needs to prioritize and implement comprehensive reforms. These reforms should focus on promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making processes (Mbambo et al., 2016). Statistical data is not available in the sources provided, but we can analyze the information given to gain insights into the weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. Based on the sources provided, it is evident that there are several factors contributing to the weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. These factors include the exclusion of community members from the budgetary process, the lack of commitment to democracy among civil society actors, and the slow reform of the justice system. The sources indicate that the slow process of handling cases, difficulty in accessing courts, and corruption within the judicial apparatus are major issues contributing to the low quality and trust in the judicial process in Pakistan.

Overall, the weak democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan are hindering the country's progress and undermining trust in the government (Qazi & Akhtar, 2024). To address these challenges, the government should prioritize judicial reform and invest in the capacity building of the judicial system. Furthermore, efforts should be made to improve access to justice and address issues of corruption within the judiciary. Additionally, there is a need for greater investment in community policing, criminal justice reform, and combating corruption and money laundering. Analyzing the sources provided, Pakistan faces significant challenges in terms of weak democracy and democratic institutions. These challenges not only hinder the progress of the country but also undermine public trust in the government and justice system. To address these challenges, comprehensive reforms are needed. These reforms should focus on promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making processes.

Why EU?

The EU has brought shifts and transitions in international politics by introducing the phenomenon of regionalism in the post second world war era (Väyrynen, 2023). The phenomenon was considered weak and fragile in the beginning but gained momentum and many neighboring states joined the European Coal and Steel Company. The Europeans got the regional identity under the ambit of European Union. The bond started to grow stronger particularly in the field of trade. The EU since then has been offering the biggest market in the world, which is lucrative to the developing and less developed states. The EU has also set normative values by promoting democratic values and basic human rights throughout the globe. This has enabled EU to maintain a leadership role in the international politics. Pakistan is also one of

those countries that look towards EU for economic and political matters (Ashraf, 2023). The European Union is not only a trading partner but one of the most important proponents of establishing democratic institutions in Pakistan to strengthen democracy in the country.

EU's Efforts in Promoting Democracy in Pakistan

The European Union has long been recognized as a key player in promoting democracy around the world (Fiott, 2019). The EU has made significant efforts to strengthen its role as a credible and reliable security provider, both within the EU and globally. Through initiatives such as the European Defence Fund, the EU aims to boost investment in key defence capabilities to deter and respond to external threats (Broeders et al., 2023). Additionally, the EU has also implemented civilian missions in third countries, such as helping to build a credible police force in Iraq and supporting the rule of law in Kosovo. These initiatives demonstrate the EU's commitment to not only protecting and defending its own citizens but also to assisting other Member States and partner countries in enhancing their security capacities. However, while the EU has made progress in these areas, its performance in promoting democracy has fallen short of its ambitions. The EU's role in promoting democracy in the world has been inconsistent and limited. While the EU has made efforts to promote democracy, its effectiveness in this regard has been hindered by several factors.

The European Union (EU) is Pakistan's biggest trading partner and has been active in reinvigorating the democratic process and strengthening the social and economic fabric of Pakistan through its development and aid policies (Fatima, 2023). The EU's engagement with Pakistan is mainly based on aid and assistance rather than as part of the EU security strategy: it is a donor-recipient relationship. There is no doubt that the fragile democracy in Pakistan requires the support and assistance of international actors. The new government must take immediate steps to strengthen the legal system, develop a new economic model, build state institutions, and overcome the menace of terrorism and extremism. The EU's multi-track approach could be very effective in this scenario. The role of the European Union in promoting democracy in Pakistan has been a topic of interest and discussion. While there are limited sources directly addressing the EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan, it is important to consider the broader context of the EU's efforts to promote democracy globally (Fiott, 2019).

The EU has been actively engaged in promoting democracy and human rights around the world, including in countries like Pakistan. However, the EU's performance in this regard has been mixed and its ambitions have not always been fully realized. This can be attributed to various factors, including the complex political dynamics within Pakistan, limitations in the EU's resources and capacity, and other competing priorities. Additionally, the EU has focused on promoting democracy through legislative, institutional, and practical measures recommended by the Commission on Human Rights. These efforts have emphasized the importance of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as ensuring access to power and its exercise in accordance with the rule of law (Kišūnaitė & Delicati, 2020). The EU's active role in the global and European multilevel human rights protection regime, as well as its primary law, such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, provides a framework for promoting democracy not only within its own member states but also in countries outside the EU. In the specific context of Pakistan, the EU's role in promoting democracy has been limited. While there may be certain initiatives or programs aimed at promoting democracy, the extent of the EU's impact in Pakistan is unclear. There is a lack of specific information on the EU's initiatives or interventions in promoting democracy in Pakistan.

It is necessary to further analyze and evaluate the specific actions and initiatives undertaken by

the EU in promoting democracy in Pakistan (Bharti, 2024). However, it is worth noting that promoting democracy in Pakistan is a complex and multifaceted task. It requires comprehensive engagement with various stakeholders, including the government, civil society organizations, and political parties. Furthermore, the EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan should be seen within the broader context of its efforts to advance democracy globally. The EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan may be limited, but it is part of its broader efforts to advance democracy globally (Mateo, 2023). Overall, the EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan has been limited and its impact and effectiveness have been mixed.

Additionally, it is important to note that promoting democracy in a country like Pakistan requires a nuanced understanding of its political landscape, cultural dynamics, and historical context. Therefore, it is crucial for the EU to tailor its strategies and interventions to the specific needs and challenges of Pakistan in order to effectively promote democracy in the country. In the specific context of Pakistan, the EU's role in promoting democracy has been limited (Shah et al., 2023). While there may be certain initiatives or programs aimed at promoting democracy, the extent of the EU's impact in Pakistan is unclear. The EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan has been limited, with mixed impact and effectiveness. Furthermore, the challenges of promoting democracy in Pakistan, such as the absence of democratic culture and tradition, disengagement of citizens, asymmetric distribution of patronage and resources, and the influence of non-state actors, make it a complex task. Moreover, Pakistan's deeply entrenched political and social structures, as well as the influence of military and religious institutions, pose significant challenges to the promotion of democracy by external factors such as the EU.

The EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan is limited, but it is part of its broader efforts to advance democracy globally. While the EU has made efforts to promote democracy in Pakistan, its impact and effectiveness have been mixed (Mangi et al., 2019). The EU's role in promoting democracy in Pakistan varies, and its effectiveness is difficult to gauge due to a challenging political landscape and various obstacles. Given the limited role and mixed impact of the EU in promoting democracy in Pakistan, it is important for the EU to reassess its strategies and interventions in order to address the specific challenges and needs of the country and improve its effectiveness in promoting democracy. The EU must carefully consider the unique challenges and needs of Pakistan in order to effectively promote democracy in the country, given the limited role and mixed impact it has had so far.

EU's Support Mission

Through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the EU supports civil society organizations that promote democracy and human rights in developing nations. In the eyes of the EU, advancing democracy entails creating a democratic electoral system, fostering civil society, and practicing good governance. According to the European Commission (2007), the EIDHR provided EUR 2,715,000 in funding to micro projects in Pakistan between 2002 and 2006. A portion of these micro-projects are related to education.

Election Observer

Sending election observers from the EU to watch the February 2008 elections was the biggest thing the EU did to help Pakistan build and maintain democracy. The EU's deployment of its EOM performed a good and helpful role in helping the results be generally accepted under challenging conditions, which in turn led to an improvement in popular trust in Pakistani democracy. The change in federal and provincial governments, together with the first moves towards restoring judicial independence, was welcomed by the

Council of the European Union (Cheesman, & Badó, 2023).

Under the state of emergency, the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) started out as an Election Assessment Team (Jastrzębski, 2024). When the state of emergency was lifted, it evolved into a Limited Election Observation Mission. When the elections were moved to February 18, 2008, it became a fully-fledged EOM. Michael Gahler, a member of the European Parliament, headed the EU EOM. A delegation of seven members from the European Parliament, headed by fellow MP Robert Evans, joined the EUEOM during the election period. The primary finding of the EU EOM was that a wide variety of opinions were expressed during the pluralistic processes of the national and provincial assembly elections. The polling process was successful, and the election was competitive.

But due to misuse of public funds and prejudice in state media towards the parties that had previously held power, there were significant issues with the way the elections were conducted and no level playing field was offered during the campaign. Consequently, the entire procedure failed to meet several international norms for democratic elections.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the EU has had a limited and inconsistently effective role in advancing democracy in Pakistan. Furthermore, it is challenging for outside players like the EU to effectively promote democracy in Pakistan due to the intricate and deeply ingrained issues the country faces, including the lack of a democratic culture, citizen disengagement, and the impact of non-state actors. In conclusion, the EU has had a limited and inconsistently effective role in advancing democracy in Pakistan.

In order to have a greater influence on advancing democracy in Pakistan, the EU must modify and customize its strategies to meet the specific demands and challenges of that nation.

1. The EU can play an effective role in implementing democratic measures through its trade policies via GSP+ status and through other trade agreements.
2. The trade involvement will enable the country to eradicate poverty which will also a path towards sustainability.
3. There is a dire need for inclusive measures of providing awareness at grass root level.
4. Organizing and including civil society in democracy awareness programs can be funded in Pakistan.
5. Organizing summits, dialogues, and exchange programs of various civil society segments including the political parties of Pakistan will also help in bringing change in approach.
6. The capacity building of institutions is also an important component of democratic reforms including parliamentary and judicial reforms.
7. There should be top to bottom approach in eradication of corruption. For which EU can enforce various case studies of eradication of corruption in the world. This can be ensured through trade policies.

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