

Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Regional Practices and Challenges in Pakistan

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1. Introduction – Media and Democracy

1. Media and Democracy

Three primary roles of the news media are globally recognized.

- As "watch-dogs" : help citizens to evaluate the performance of the government, guard the public interest, and to promote government accountability and transparency

1. Media and Democracy

- As "agenda-setters": to raise awareness of social problems, highlight issues of concern to the public, and provide information about potential challenges and crises.
- As "gate-keepers": to provide forum to governance actors to discuss issues of national concern and promote dialogue and tolerance among diverse set of interests and communities.

1. Media and Democracy

- Wide gaps between democratic ideals and the practice of media
- Quality of media practice determined by its environment and internal dynamics

1. Media and Democracy

- Media practice is influenced by
 - Ineffective internal codes of conduct
 - journalists capacities: individual and group levels
 - lack of a tradition of fair and balanced reporting

1. Media and Democracy

- media ownership and alignment with powerful groups
- tightly controlled official information
- regulatory frameworks governing freedom of information, and
- journalists security

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2. Quality of a Democracy: Towards Transition and Consolidation

2. Quality of a Democracy: Towards Transition and Consolidation

- Democracy as a spectrum from “minimalist” conceptions of a political system of political rights that specifies how leadership should be designated at the highest national level
- To “maximalist” conceptions which enumerates various rights and liberties (freedom of expression, press, organization, etc.)

*Range as defined by Linz and Stepan

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

- Number of strategies to measure and assess quality of democracy :
 - Categorical measures (democracy vs non-democracy)
 - scale measures (e.g. a rating on a 1 to 10 scale)

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

- Objective measures (e.g. voter turnout, gender balance, freedom of information and party share of the vote)
- Hybrid measures of democratic practices
- Perceptions of democracy based on mass public opinion surveys

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

IDEA's Framework for Democracy Assessment

- Four pillars
 - Citizenship, law and rights
 - Representative and accountable government
 - Civil society and popular participation
 - Democracy beyond the state

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

**United Nations Development Program
Framework to “deepen” democracy**

**Assess democratic institutions and
practices including**

- Electoral process based on multiparty system
- Parliamentary process and quality of the oversight of the executive
- Independence of the judiciary

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

- Freedom of media and access to information
- Devolution of political and financial powers to sub-national and local governments
- Civil society engagement
- Protection of human rights including minority rights and women's rights

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

Democratic transition is complete when (*according to Linz and Stepan*):

1. Agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

2. A government has come to power as a direct result of a free and popular vote
3. Government has de facto authority to generate new policies
4. Judicial, executive, and legislative power does not have to share power with other bodies de jure

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

- Completed democratic transition does not mark the inception of consolidation

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

Consolidated democracy is a political situation in which Democracy has become “the only game in town”:

- No serious attempts at overthrow or secession
- Attitudinal democracy where even severe political and economic crises are addressed within the democratic framework

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

- Constitutionally all actors are habituated to solving political conflict through laws, norms, and procedures sanctioned by the democratic process

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

Consolidated democracies need to have 5 interconnected and mutually reinforcing arenas:

- 1) Civil society space
- 2) Autonomous political society
- 3) Rule of law
- 4) Usable state bureaucracy
- 5) Institutionalized economic society

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

1) Civil society:

Where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals articulate values, create associations and advance their interests

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

2) Autonomous political society:

Where polity arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

3) Rule of Law:

Supports the independence of political and civil society

A clear hierarchy of laws interpreted by a independent judicial system supported by a strong legal culture in civil society

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

4) Usable state bureaucracy:

Helps exercise state claim to legitimate monopoly on use of force

Allows the state to “command, regulate and extract”

2. Quality of a Democracy: Transition and Consolidation

5) Institutionalized economic society:

Socially and politically accepted norms that mediate between the state and market

Consolidated democracy needs a politically regulated market



3. Where Asian Countries Fall on this Spectrum

3. Asian Countries on the Spectrum

- Asia was at the forefront of the third wave of democracy decade and a half ago, with important transitions beginning in South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines

3. Asian Countries on the Spectrum

- Outside of Europe, Asia is the only region in which a large set of consolidated democracies has emerged in the third wave

3. Asian Countries on the Spectrum

- Asia has seen the emergence of five consolidated democracies since the mid-1980s.
- Those countries are Mongolia, Japan, India, South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan

3. Asian Countries on the Spectrum

- Freedom House Survey includes both analytical reports and numerical ratings, measures freedom according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties
- Freedom Rating is just the average of the other 2 listed scores
- Scored 1-7 with 1 being “best” and most-free and 7 being least-free

3. Asian Countries on the Spectrum

- Political rights ratings are based on an evaluation of three subcategories: electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government.
- Civil liberties ratings are based on an evaluation of four subcategories: freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights.

3) Freedom in Asia

Country	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	Freedom Rating
Mongolia	2	1	1.5
Japan	2	1	1.5
Republic of Korea	2	1	1.5
Indonesia	3	2	2.5
India	3	2	2.5
Philippines	3	3	3

3) Freedom in Asia

Country	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	Freedom Rating
Bangladesh ?	4	3	3.5
Malaysia	4	4	4
Nepal	4	4	4
Thailand ?	4	4	4
Singapore	4	4	4
Pakistan	5	4	4.5
Myanmar	5	6	5.5
China	6	7	6.5



Mongolia

- Mongolia a consolidated democracy in the shadow of two giants
- Free and fair parliamentary elections in 2012, further confirming Mongolia's status as Asia's only post-socialist democracy



Republic of Korea

- **Korea is an OECD member entering its third decade of democracy**
- **“people power” emerged in 1987, building a coalition of labor movements, student groups, and a middle class upset by the heavy-handed governance of the Chun Doo Hwan regime.**
- **Homogenous society with spectacular economic performance**



Indonesia

- The leading consolidated (not fully) democracy in the largest Muslim majority country with free elections, civilian oversight of the military, engaged civil society, “big bang” decentralization
- Challenges: continued religious intolerance, extremism, human rights, corruption

Myanmar



- Progress in peace negotiations with ethnic armed groups and continued its relaxation of controls over the media and civil society in 2013
- Challenges: weak government enforcement of the rule of law, slow progress of reforms of the 2008 constitution, Rohingya issue and religion based violence, arrests of political activists



Malaysia

- Malaysian democracy may be healthier than it has been in decades: repeal of Internal Security Act, the movement for transparency, competitive elections
- Challenges: Peaceful Assembly Act used to impose limits on a large demonstration calling for clean elections, government retains powers to curb civil liberties and media

India



- A consolidated democracy with regular elections, multi-party coalition governments, independence of the judiciary, Access to Information Act, active civil society
- Challenges: Intrastate conflicts and ethnic violence in several states, corruption, inadequate access to basic services

Bangladesh



- Political polarization and dysfunction continued to worsen during 2013, as the opposition held numerous street protests and boycotted elections; one party dominance and “unstable stability”



Thailand

- The government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, elected in 2011, consolidated its grip on power during 2012. However, links to deposed former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, remained a matter of contention, and new opposition protests called for another military coup.
- Recent military coup and roll back of democratic gains due to lack of national consensus on legitimacy of electoral process



Philippines

- October 2012, the government signed an agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that established a framework for peace on the southern island of Mindanao
- Recent democratic gains and rapid economic growth



4) Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Pakistan

4) Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Pakistan

Recent democratic gains:

- Peaceful transfer of power from one civilian government to another;
- national consensus on the need for the continuity of democratic process;
- 18th Amendment to devolve powers;
- pro-active media and civil society

4) Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Pakistan

- Extremism and violence; weak writ of the State in some areas; attacks against religious minorities; threats against journalists and human right defenders
- Context matters: factors that are likely to influence the quality and sustainability of democracy

4. Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Pakistan

- Gaps between democratic institutional arrangements and practice of democracy: weak political institutions
- Elections as events are necessary but not sufficient: consensus on the perceived legitimacy of the electoral process the foundation

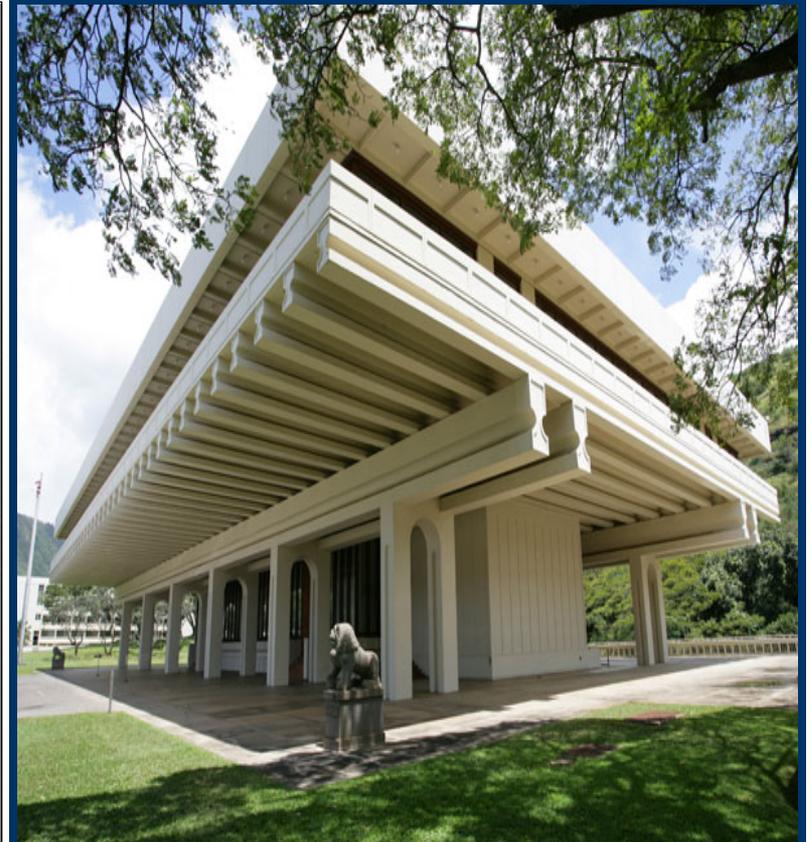
4) Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Asia

- Civil-military relations including the civilian oversight of the military continue to dominate the process of sustainability of democracy
- Ethnic diversities/conflicts and regional disparities influence democratic “political culture”

4) Sustaining Democracy: Challenges in Asia

- Rising citizen expectations for access to services and “democracy dividend” often lead to declining trust in government: PILDAT report on Quality of Governance
- Feudal power structures, poverty and weak middle class

Part V: Summation



Summing Up

- Sustaining democracy is a long-term process influenced by the socio-economic and cultural context
- Media can significantly contribute to sustaining democracy but is also constrained by existing democratic deficits in the country



MAHALO