



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Hybrid Democracy in Pakistan: A Case Study of The PDM Government**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research venture investigates the experiences of hybrid democracy during the reign of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). The study also aims to address the challenges faced by the PDM government's hybrid democratic setup from 2022 to 2023, and its repercussions for the future of democracy in Pakistan. The historical process of democracy in Pakistan has frequently been the focus of discussions about its structure, dual nature, operation, and derailment for a variety of reasons. Understanding their experiences, difficulties, and prospects is a crucial component of this dissertation to comprehend the hybrid nature of the democratic system of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). The nature of this study is descriptive. Data collected from primary and secondary sources are reviewed and analyzed using qualitative approach of research. The in-depth interviews from participants were also conducted that helped to address the core of this issue. The findings of this research show that the historical democratic mechanism in Pakistan has been very complex. The study shows that the hybrid nature of democracy in Pakistan during the PDM government has seen reasonable civil-military relations, and indirect military interventions that resulted in a host of challenges for the likely future of democracy in Pakistan. The findings of research also found various success, failures, and difficulties, and potentials of a hybrid democratic system in Pakistan under the PDM administration. In a nutshell, the findings also show that Pakistan's hybrid democracy under the PDM government was chaotic and authoritarian, leading to an economic crisis and restrictions on the right to dissent.

**KEYWORDS** Democracy, Government, Hybrid, Pakistan, PDM

**Introduction**

The history of hybrid democracy in Pakistan dates to the inception of the country. The formation of a hybrid democratic system in Pakistan involved authoritarian and democratic features. There are several historical factors that led to the foundations for the establishment of hybrid democratic system in Pakistan. First, the role of military in politics and affairs of the government particularly in foreign policy has a significant influence on the experiences of democracy in Pakistan (Yusuf M., 2006). The formation of hybrid democratic system in Pakistan can be traced from the involvement of military in political events. The influence of military in political affairs from 1956 to 2008 includes main events such as the abrogation of 1956 constitution, overthrow of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1977 and the assassination of former female Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto in 2007 are just a few glimpses from the past. Since then, the use of veto in legislation, appointment of judges, and dissolution of civilian government by military establishment remained a significant part of democratic setup in Pakistan (Siddiq, 2019). Second, the ethnic politics and domestic divisions also contributed to the formation of a hybrid democratic system in Pakistan. The diverse religious, lingual, and ethnic groups such as Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi, and Pashtun narratives, have a strong influence on the political sphere of the country. Last but not the least, economic challenges coupled with the political instability, from the inception to modern day, has also been leading factors that resulted in the formation of hybrid democracy in Pakistan. The rampant poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, terrorism, and social unrest have always discouraged economic prosperity and growth in the country. Therefore, hybrid democratic system has remained an integral part of

Pakistan's political system but the hybrid democratic system during the PDM rule has different features that frames a coalition rule of political parties (Siddiqa, 2019).

### **Conceptualizing the Term Hybrid Democracy**

The term Hybrid Democracy is a debate concept. The term is often considered as a complex concept that requires a deep understanding of scholarly approaches. Various discussions and debates have been addressed in different academic circles to define this term; however, the work of following academicians is sought to conceptualize the term hybrid democracy.

The word hybrid democracy, according to Henry E. Hale, is a political system or a form of government that is a mixture of democratic as well as authoritarian features. The political and judicial institutions are controlled by the military and civilian authorities. Power is indirectly or directly divided between these two institutions leading to the clash of interest and dissolution of democratic assemblies by the dictatorial bodies (Hale, 2010). This has been the case of Pakistan. When the military interests clashed with civilian interests, the event has also led to the end or replacement of one civilian rule with another civilian or military rule. Huntington views hybrid democracy as a corrupted and diminished autocratic system that only aims to serve the interests of the powerful bodies in the state (Huntington S. P., 1991). This definition provides an insight into the nature of hybrid democracy that Pakistan inherited from its inception and remained for at least six decades.

Morlino's elucidation of the term hybrid democracy includes the concepts such as pluralism, authoritarianism, traditionalism, and autonomous characteristics. He is of the view that the concept of hybrid democracy is a traditional and limited pluralistic system that incorporates authoritarian and traditional mechanisms of ruling. For instance, the rule of monarchs, nobles, and autocrats in Russia or elsewhere in the world (Morlino, 2009). Besides, the understanding of Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky on hybrid democracy is comprehensive. They are of the view that hybrid regimes come from systems of competitive regimes such as tutelary or guided democracies, and authoritarianism model. These models are non-democratic controlled and influenced by religious and military actors (Way, 2002) This has been the case of Pakistan as well from its inception to till now. To sum up, hybrid democracy is a system of rule or government that is controlled by military, civilian, and religious actors. The system is a combination of democratic and authoritarian features aiming to rule and preserve interests collectively.

### **Hybrid Democracy During the PDM Rule:**

The military has ruled Pakistan for a very long time, and the nation's democracy has always been precarious and unpredictable. But in recent years, a strong push for civilian supremacy and a more democratic form of government has emerged. In 2020, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was founded as the movement's zenith. The PDM is an alliance of opposition parties that have a common stance against political meddling by the armed forces. The interaction between civilian and military participants in the governmental system defines the concept of hybrid democracy, which has been continually reflected in Pakistan's political environment. Due to the intricate relationships between strong military institutions and elected civilian governments, democratic consolidation, and governance have historically encountered challenges.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is a coalition of eleven political parties (Kugelman, 2022). The coalition was founded in 2022 against the government of ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan (Afzal, 2023). After a motion of no confidence was passed against Imran Khan's administration, the tenure began. A hybrid democratic system has been established in the nation thanks to the coalition government. A political structure that combines aspects of democracy and dictatorship is known as a hybrid democracy. Elections

may take place under a hybrid democracy, but they can be significantly influenced by the military or other influential elites. In a hybrid democracy, there may also be rampant human rights abuse and a lack of the rule of law (Katohar, 2023).

Since then, lack of accountability, weak institutions, political chaos, and instability have been experienced as major challenges to the PDM hybrid democratic government throughout its tenure (Siddiq, 2022). A hybrid democracy that is entrenched in Pakistan as a result of the government's failure to address these issues has had a detrimental impact on the democratic values of the nation. In this study, the hybrid democracy that Pakistan experienced while being ruled by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is examined. Its primary goals are to analyze the dynamics of power distribution, the influence of political actors, and the subsequent impacts on democratic administration. By examining the subtle features of this hybrid political framework, this study contributes to the greater discussion on democratic stability and civilian supremacy.

### **Literature Review**

A political system that combines democratic governance and authoritarian behaviors is known as a hybrid democracy. This idea is a synthesis of democratic and non-democratic values that are also regarded as essential components of this system. Consistent elections, societal interests and legal frameworks, accountability, and inclusivity may all be considered democratic aspects of the idea. Censorship, limitations on dissent and freedom, and electoral manipulation are some of the autocratic traits, meanwhile. Thomas Carothers, Lucan Way, and Steven Levitsky are just a few academics who have discussed and contested the idea of hybrid democracy.

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way introduced hybrid democracy as a 'competitive authoritarianism' comprising autocratic features such as manipulation of elections under the semblance of democratic practices (Way, 2010). Diamond and Morlino produced a typology of hybrid regimes that incorporates 'competitive oligarchy' and 'incomplete democracy'. These concepts address democratic and autocratic elements of a political system that affect the political processes in any state (Morlino, 2005).

However, Thomas Carothers's 'Graze Zone of Governance' is also an attempt that aims to address the blend of authoritarianism and democracy (Carothers, 2002). While Huntington's 'Bounded Democracy' is constrained by socio-economic, cultural, and historical factors leading to the improbable future of democracy. Therefore, in case of hybrid democracy in Pakistan under the PDM regime, has the attributes of authoritarianism and democracy creating a system that falls short of being fully democratic in nature.

Niloufer Siddiqui, Mariam Mufti, and Sahar Shafqat traced the history of democracy in Pakistan. The work elucidates the history of military coups and implications for constitutions, the experience of presidential and parliamentary forms of governments, and their impacts on general elections in the country. The study addresses that the military's involvement in civilian affairs through soft coup dismissing already established government and forming a selective government has been damaging the voting turnouts and electoral process in the country. Therefore, hybrid democratic setup has a long history of fragility in Pakistan which hinders the probable future of democracy in Pakistan (Niloufer Siddiqui, 2020).

The work of Katherine Adene explains the democratic history and 2013 election turnouts in Pakistan. The work elaborates that the democratic experience of Pakistan from its inception has been a challenge for the democratic process in the country. Though the democratic history of Pakistan remained fragile but the elections turnout in 2013 marked a shift in democratic setup. The elections of 2013 resulted in the first ever democratic transition of power from one civilian authority to another elected civilian government.

Therefore, Katherine suggests a distinguished nature of hybrid democracy in Pakistan that includes the indirect military rule over direct civilian rule resulting in autocratic and democratic system in Pakistan (Adeney, 2015).

Ian Talbot's work on hybrid democracy in Pakistan after President Pervez Musharaf's era provides a sketch on the debate of probable and improbable future of democracy in Pakistan. The work elucidates that the end of Musharaf's regime resulted in the formation of a hybrid democratic political system in Pakistan from 2008 to onward. The hybrid system exists due to the involvement of the military in civilian affairs. The military's direct and indirect involvement has been promoting a hybrid democratic system with authoritarian characteristics while derailing the probable future of democracy in the country. The process of elections and civil liberty, freedom of dissent have been subject to military influence. Therefore, the PDM government's hybrid rule has the same features including the civil-military rule (Talbot, 2021).

Abdul Basit's research article published in Foreign Affairs Magazine also highlights the hybrid democratic system in Pakistan particularly after the end of military's direct involvement in the political affairs of the country. After Musharaf's era in 2008, the smooth transition of two democratic regimes under civilian authority has been lauded as the promotion of democracy in Pakistan. However, soon after the dismiss of Imran Khan's government, the hybridity in democracy is reinstalled through the indirect involvement of military establishment. This has resulted in the influence of the military in democratic transitions of the country. The end of Imran Khan's government, for instance, was a damage to the successful transition of civilian rule in the country, thus ultimately results in the formation of hybrid democratic system with authoritarian and democratic features (Basit, 2022).

To sum up, the democratic history of Pakistan has remained a complex phenomenon due to power dynamics and policymaking shared by civilian and military-political frameworks. However, the problem lies in understanding the mechanism and governance repercussions of hybrid democracy under the government of the Pakistan Democratic Movement. The paper explores and investigates the experiences of the hybrid democratic framework, decisions, policy making, and implications during the Pakistan Democratic Movement government for democracy in Pakistan.

## **Material and Methods**

Since the nature of the study is descriptive, the qualitative approach of research has been used. This method of research seeks to examine and address the descriptive analysis of existing knowledge based on the experience of hybrid democracy in Pakistan particularly during the Pakistan Democratic Movement. Primary and secondary data sources are employed to analyze and express the topic.

## **Data Collection**

To address the experiences of hybrid democracy during the government of Pakistan Democratic Movement, this research venture has incorporated primary as well as secondary sources of data.

### **Primary Data**

This research venture has incorporated in-depth interviews to address the problem statement. In-depth interviews with journalists, media anchors, politicians, and academicians are conducted. The conduct of interviews included in-person and virtual means of communication.

### **Secondary Data**

The secondary source of data is used to review the existing knowledge based on the experience of hybrid democracy in Pakistan during the tenure of the PDM government. Available Journal articles, research articles, data from archives, political and intellectual debates, news items, books, and documentaries are investigated and reviewed aiming to explore the experience of hybrid democracy in Pakistan.

### **Thematic Analysis**

To address the experience of hybrid democracy in Pakistan during the reign of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, a thematic analysis is being incorporated. This method of analysis helps contextualize and conceptualize the existing material on the topic. Moreover, through thematic analysis, different themes and coding schemes are extracted from complex data. Therefore, data is analyzed through a thematic process.

### **Time Frame**

This research study investigates the experiences of the Pakistan Democratic Movement government. The tenure of the PDM started on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and ended on 14 August 2023. Therefore, this research enterprise examines only the tenure of the PDM government.

### **Sampling**

#### **Sampling Technique**

The Purposive sampling technique is applied in the research to select the best samples for interviews. Purposive sampling enables to selection of the most experienced samples for interviews. Therefore, to discuss the experiences of the PDM government's tenure in Pakistan, the most experienced respondents are selected and contacted.

#### **Sample Size**

The size of this research study is thirty. Due to the shortage of time and dearth of financial resources, only thirty respondents were managed to conduct in-depth interviews.

#### **Sample Age**

The criteria of age for this research begin from thirty years to sixty years. This age criterion is set due to the requirements of the topic. This is because only experienced participants could offer in-depth knowledge and data on the topic.

#### **Sample Gender**

The sample size for this research is thirty. The size is divided between male and female participants. Out of thirty participants, fifteen males and fifteen females were selected. This equal ratio of participants aims to address gender parity in the study.

## **Hybrid Regime Theory**

This research study has employed the 'Hybrid Regime Theory'. This theory addresses the blend of democratic and autocratic features of the political system. The theory concedes that the elements of democracy and autocracy can exist together and form a complex power structure, governance, and political structure. However, in the case of hybrid democracy in Pakistan during the PDM government, the applications of this theory offer a lens through which the experiences of hybrid democracy and hybrid governance can be examined. The theory also provides insight into understanding the extent to which the governance approach of the PDM government aligned with hybrid democracy and its repercussions on the different facets of governance. This theory helps to examine the nature of hybrid democracy in Pakistan with particular emphasis on the government of the Pakistan Democratic Movement. Additionally, this theoretical model also addresses the strengths and weaknesses, challenges, and implications associated with the hybrid democratic system. Therefore, applying this framework to understand the hybrid democratic setup of the Pakistan Democratic Movement helps to address the core concerns of the study.

## **Results and Discussions**

The system of hybrid democracy in Pakistan has a long history that dates to the emergence of the first constitution of the country in 1956. The improbable future of democracy and derailing of democratic values in Pakistan can be traced from the repeated involvement of military and bureaucratic institutions in civilian affairs from 1956 to 2022. However, to address a political hybrid democratic system in Pakistan during the PDM rule, this paper seeks to address the experiences of the PDM government. To address this phenomenon, in-depth interviews with participants helped to understand the nature and experiences of hybrid democracy during the reign of the PDM government in Pakistan. The findings of the research illustrate that the PDM government has faced a host of challenges in its efforts to establish a more democratic system of government in Pakistan. Most participants believed that the military has continued to interfere in politics, and the PDM government has been unable to pass legislation that would strengthen civilian supremacy. The research also found that the economic crisis has made it difficult for the PDM government to deliver on its promises to the people. In addition to these challenges, the PDM government has also been criticized for its authoritarian tendencies, for example, the government has cracked down on dissent and has used the courts to silence its critics. With the help of in-depth interviews, the study found following key areas of discussion during the reign of the PDM government in Pakistan.

### **Experience of Civil-Military Relations:**

The civil-military relation in Pakistan has been a debate of years. The involvement of military establishment in the affairs of civilian authority has been a common practice in Pakistan since its inception. The hybridity of government led by the civilian and military has also been discussed during the government of the PDM. The results of this study found that, in the wake of political chaos and economic problems, the PDM government was formed by ousting the ruling government of ex-prime minister Imran Khan on the promise to maintain formidable civil-military relations, the prosperity of the economy, and address security concerns. This political event reflects the interference of the military within the domain of civilian authority. However, the study also found that the most crucial challenge to the PDM government has been the maintenance of a balanced approach between civilian and military powers. Since the military has a long history of intervention in the politics of the country, the PDM government has maintained a balanced approach. Though the PDM government has pledged to reduce the military influence in politics, it has been unable to achieve this manifestation. Therefore, the study concludes that military intervention in domestic and foreign policies has been witnessed during the reign of the PDM in Pakistan.

### **Experience of Economic Problems**

Since its inception, economic crisis has been a subject of debate in Pakistan. The misutilization and underutilization of scarce resources in the country is one of the major causes leading to the economic fiasco and poverty in the country. The dependency on foreign aid and loans coupled with rampant corruption have been impeding the growth of economy in the country. Additionally, economic crisis has also been assumed during the PDM tenure in Pakistan. The economic challenges during the government of PDM were also part of focus group discussions and interviews with participants. The participants were of the view that it is another major challenge to the PDM government. The government of the PDM has been seen tackling and addressing the economic problems. On the brink of a falling economy followed by high rates of inflation and unemployment, the government has announced several reforms to save the economy (Siddiqi, 2022). The government has also sought loans from financial institutions like the IMF, but prosperity remained a mere dream. The government just saved the country's economy from default but achieving prosperity requires more effort, time, and resources.

### **Experience of Security Dilemma**

The geographical position of Pakistan makes it face both traditional and non-traditional security threats internally and externally. The traditional security challenges to Pakistan comes from its east and west. From the eastern side, India possesses a potential threat while Afghanistan from its west resulting to incursion of terrorism in the country. The nuclearization of South Asia and the increased use of hybrid warfare from India has also been resulting security dilemma in the country. Additionally, security challenges were also part of the interviews and focus group discussions with participants. According to participants, traditional and non-traditional security concerns to the nation have been seen as extra significant difficulties for the PDM administration. The findings of the research address that Pakistan has a troubled human security background and a long history of terrorism. The PDM began talks with terrorist organizations like the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan to address these security issues, but the government's attempts have come under fire. International institutions' financial support for mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change has been praised, but the overall management of the security situation has drawn criticism. The fresh wave of Balochistan insurgency has also been reported during PDM tenure in Pakistan. A paradigm shift has been experienced in the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). The group has begun recruiting women as insurgents and suicide bombers. For instance, the suicide attack carried by Shari Baloch against Chinese consultants in Karachi is one the cases showing the participation of women in Baloch insurgency. Therefore, the study concludes that the hybrid democratic government of the PDM has also experienced the internal and external dilemmas of security.

### **Experience with the Electoral Process**

The data on the electoral process during the hybrid democratic regime of the PDM was also collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The findings of the research elucidate that the fundamental element of democracy during the regime of the PDM was considered competitive elections. Since the democratic culture in society is provided by free and fair elections, this domain during the rule of the PDM government was also experienced. The study found that the domain of elections at local levels during the PDM administration has signaled the beginning of a new democratic period in the nation. The electoral process, including manipulation, purported regularities, and legal difficulties, has been studied during the PDM's hybrid governance. Results show that the government has taken some constructive actions, such as holding free and fair elections and reducing censorship.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Pakistan Democratic Movement has encountered an autocratic and democratic hybrid political system in Pakistan. The PDM government was established soon after the ouster of Imran Khan's government on 10 April 2022 through a no-confidence motion in the parliament. Since then, a coalition government has been formed by eleven political parties in Pakistan. The coalition government has come to be known as the Pakistan Democratic Movement. The hybrid system of democracy formed by the PDM began its course of action on 10 April 2022 and ended on 14 August 2023 with the formation of an interim government. However, in terms of the experiences of the PDM government, the study found that the hybrid democratic experience of the PDM government has had a significant impact on the nation's political, judicial, and economic systems.

The hybrid democracy of the PDM government was determined to have complex governance. The study has navigated the difficulties and successes as well as the various objectives and interests connected with the hybrid regime. The study also found that the hybrid democratic structure established the PDM government is different from the earlier hybrid democratic systems in Pakistan. It is because only civilian leadership was involved in the coalition government while previously military and civilian collectively formed the system. Therefore, the hybrid democratic system during the PDM rule has a different history from the past experiences. However, the influence of the military cannot be denied. Additionally, the formation of this coalition was supported and familiarized by the military established to ouster the government of Imran Khan in 2022.

To sum up, to create a stable and inclusive political and democratic system in Pakistan, numerous lessons can be drawn from the PDM government's hybrid democratic path. For example, handling issues related to civilizing nations, dealing with economic problems, holding free and fair elections, and dealing with security issues. In addition, the formation and experiments of unprecedented systems are derailing the democratic values and resulting in the improbable future of democracy in Pakistan. Doing so can ameliorate and enlarge the democratic values in Pakistan.



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