

THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN BUILDING GOOD GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT:

This article aims to highlight the role of a democratic system in the pursuit of good governance, democratic transition is a critical process that lays the foundation for good governance by establishing accountable institutions, fostering citizen participation, and promoting responsive governance essential for stable democracies, Civil society plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between governments and citizens, advocating for rights, peace building, and enhancing collaboration between stakeholders to achieve good governance.

Keywords: Democracy; Good Governance; transparency; independence.

INTRODUCTION:

Democratic transition is one of the important concepts that have occupied political discourse. It has become a social demand that occupies a prominent place on the list of necessities for meeting political standards and values. This choice regulates genuine competition among various political actors within the state on equal footing, ensuring integrity in the peaceful transition towards reforming the governance system. Establishing democratic rules in societies builds a social contract between the governing and the governed. This perspective is embodied in the form of a constitution that regulates political life. It includes a set of laws that define the state's structure and clarify the system of governance. The constitution plays a fundamental role in resolving the problematic aspects of democratic transition, ensuring indicators and standards that achieve a mature model of governance.

The concept of good governance has become closely associated with democracy in light of international transformations, especially after the end of the Cold War. The two concepts have become intertwined in a new format of governance, becoming

essential conditions for achieving political reform, social stability, and all forms of development.

As a result, good governance has become a pressing issue in our current era, as it constitutes a comprehensive system capable of mitigating conflicts and increasing integration and interaction among various stakeholders within the state. This is achieved through enhancing accountability, oversight, and incentivization, as well as optimizing resource utilization. Good governance works towards maximizing the value of the state and supporting its competitiveness, thereby helping to create new opportunities in governance.

Research problem: In this context, the aim of this article is to find the relation between democracy transitioning and good governance, to conclude that we will present to you many definitions and principles upon which both democracy and good governance are based.

To what extent does democratic transition contribute to promoting democratic governance in achieving sustainable development in the region?

This problem can be divided into sub-questions:

- What is the impact of democratic transition?
- What are the pillars and determinants of good governance?
- What are the rules for good governance?

First: The Conceptual Framework of Democracy:

- **Concept of Democracy (Language):** The Arabic term "الديمقراطية" (Democracy) has been defined by the Arabic lexicon as "politically" one of the forms of governance in which sovereignty belongs to the people, and "socially" as a way of life based on the principle of equality, freedom of opinion, and pluralism (Ibrahim, 2004, p. 308).
- **The concept of democracy (terminologically):** Starting from the assumption that the Greeks are the originators of this term, referring back to what they meant by it is considered a reference framework in understanding this term and the subsequent developments it underwent. The Greeks defined this word by combining two components: "démō" meaning the people, and "kraci" meaning power. Thus, the Greek definition of democracy refers to the power of the people.

As for the researcher Lowell, he presented a definition of democracy as an experiment in governance. In his view, democracy is a model that can be either

successful or unsuccessful, expressing the construction of the political system and its concept in managing society. These concepts presented represent a different view of democracy in terms of its form, considering it as a representation that indicates the form and type of governance (dikacti, 1955, p. 19).

The researcher **John Stuart Mill** defined democracy as a form of governance in which the entire population or the majority exercises the authority of government through representatives elected by themselves periodically. Mill viewed democracy as a system where the people, by electing their representatives, delegate their powers to them to fulfill their requirements (kadir, 1974, p. 6).

1-The pillars of democracy :

The foundations of democracy encompass a range of interconnected elements that underpin and uphold a thriving democratic system. Based on the information provided, three primary pillars consistently emerge:

- **Law:** This includes constitutionalism, the rule of law, and the separation of powers. Legal frameworks provide the structure for democratic processes, ensuring fairness, equality before the law, and accountability through independent courts.
- **Representation:** This refers to the electoral process, political participation, and citizens' ability to freely and fairly choose their leaders. Elected representatives are entrusted to act in the interests of their constituents and advance the common good.
- **Knowledge:** This encompasses educational institutions, a free press, and public discourse. Citizen understanding of their rights, the law, and government enables effective participation in democratic decision-making. A well-informed populace fosters critical thinking, informed debate, and responsible leadership (<https://am.aals.org/past/am20/theme/>, s.d.).

Furthermore, some sources also highlight additional components that contribute to the strength and stability of democracies, albeit as secondary or complementary factors:

Security: Ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens, protecting them from both external threats and internal instabilities.

Prosperity: Promoting economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development.

Protection: Safeguarding citizens' rights and freedoms, addressing issues such as crime, terrorism, and human rights violations.

Development: Encouraging social progress, environmental conservation, and global cooperation (statesman, 2010).

2-Forms and models of democracy:

Democracy encompasses a variety of forms aimed at distributing power among the people and ensuring that the government reflects their will. Here are some prominent types of democracy, each with detailed explanations:

- **Direct Democracy:**

This form allows citizens to make decisions directly without intermediaries. They vote on specific policies, laws, and proposals individually or collectively through initiatives and referenda. Direct democracy is typically associated with smaller communities due to scalability challenges at larger scales (lebertie, 2021).

- **Representative Democracy:**

In this system, citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. It strikes a balance between efficient governance and citizen involvement in the political process. Representative democracy aims to establish checks and balances within the government and encourages active participation through periodic elections (smarter, s.d.).

- **Constitutional Democracy:**

Constitutions set the framework for representative democracy, ensuring that the government adheres to specific rules and principles. A constitutional democracy guarantees fundamental rights and liberties, promotes stability, and provides mechanisms for peacefully resolving conflicts (canet, 2004, p. 16).

- **Pluralist Democracy:**

Pluralist democracy involves diverse groups competing for influence, with no single group dominating politics. This setup fosters healthy debates and encourages innovation as competing interests vie for power. Pluralist democracy also promotes tolerance and respect for differing opinions (academy, s.d.).

- **Elite Democracy:**

Elite democracy is defined by the concentration of power among a select few individuals, often those who are wealthy or educated. Critics contend that this system contradicts the principles of true democracy. However, proponents argue that elite democracy ensures that capable individuals lead the nation.

- **Autocratic Democracy:**

Autocratic democracy, also known as illiberal democracy or hybrid regime, blends democratic features with authoritarian practices. While presenting itself as democratic superficially, this form of government actually consolidates power among a ruling elite or a charismatic leader.

- **Consensus Democracy:**

Consensus democracy aims to reach widespread agreement among stakeholders, fostering harmony and reducing conflict. This type of democracy emphasizes collaboration and compromise, valuing input from all parties involved.(study smarter, s.d.)

These different forms of democracy are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and many modern democracies incorporate elements from multiple systems. Therefore, it is important to recognize the nuanced distinctions between them to grasp the intricate nature of contemporary democracies.

Second:The righteous governance or good governance:

Good governance is a concept that encompasses the principles and practices of effective, transparent, and accountable governance. It refers to the manner in which power is exercised, decisions are made, and resources are managed within a society. At its core, good governance ensures that the interests of all stakeholders, including citizens, are taken into account and that decisions are made in their best interests.

Key elements of good governance include the rule of law, transparency, accountability, participation, inclusivity, and responsiveness. These principles help to ensure that government institutions operate efficiently and effectively, promote social justice, and foster economic development. Good governance is essential for building trust between citizens and the government, as well as for promoting stability, peace, and prosperity within a society.

In today's interconnected and rapidly changing world, the importance of good governance cannot be overstated. It is crucial for addressing complex global challenges such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and environmental degradation. By upholding the principles of good governance, countries can create an enabling environment for sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all.

1-Definition of good governance:

As **the United Nations Development Program** (1997) formulated a more comprehensive concept for good governance as follows: "It is the exercise of

economic, political, and administrative authority to manage state affairs in a manner that meets the needs and aspirations of citizens at all levels. It encompasses the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens express their interests, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and engage in mediation to resolve their differences(Aleissawi, 2006, p. 37).

In 1990, the **World Bank** defined good governance as follows: "It is the exercise of power in managing the economic and social resources of the country for development(Tawfik, 2005, p. 27).

Therefore, it can be concluded that Good governance is a method and style of governance that relies on mechanisms and principles of sound democratic selection for positions of responsibility in the management of the state and society, and on the commitment to specific standards in institutional leadership and decision-making at the local and national levels, through the activation of a tight system of rules and values, such as transparency, mutual monitoring, accountability, rule of law, extensive and organized participation of the private sector and civil society in the decision-making process, to avoid tyranny and monopolization of power and to entrench corruption or factors leading to it, and thus to develop the conditions of life in society and achieve development and stability

2-Principles and Rules of Good Governance: Good governance refers to the responsible conduct of public affairs and management of public resources. It is essential for maintaining public trust and achieving a nation where all can thrive. There are various principles and rules of good governance, which include(abdelkarim, 1999, p. 217):

1-The Principle of Separation of Powers:

The principle of separation of powers is a fundamental aspect of good governance, emphasizing the division of governmental authority among different branches to prevent the concentration of power in one entity. This principle is typically structured into three main branches:

- **Legislative Branch:** Responsible for making laws, this branch comprises elected representatives who represent the interests of the people. It drafts, debates, and passes legislation, ensuring that laws reflect the will of the populace.
- **Executive Branch:** Tasked with implementing and enforcing laws, the executive branch includes the head of state, government ministers, and administrative agencies. It executes policies, manages public affairs, and oversees the implementation of laws.

- **Judicial Branch:** Charged with interpreting laws and resolving disputes, the judicial branch comprises independent courts and judges. It ensures that laws are applied fairly and impartially, protects individual rights, and adjudicates legal conflicts.

2-The Principle of Judicial Independence: The judiciary is an ancient institution that emerged with the formation of the earliest human societies, as part of the power structure and governance system. Its primary and noble goal has always been justice and equality, aspirations shared by all peoples and communities regardless of their beliefs, religions, or cultures.

The independence of the judiciary means that judges exercise their functions without interference or pressure from any external party, whether executive, legislative, or otherwise. This means that the judge must be independent in making decisions and issuing judgments based on the law and the evidence presented without influence from any other party (younes, 2007, p. 21).

3-The principle of media independence: The principle of media independence refers to the necessity for media outlets to be free from any interventions or directives from government authorities or any other entities. This principle aims to ensure freedom of expression and the public's right to access information without external influences restricting this freedom.

The media has become a vital necessity in any society, serving as a link between governing authorities and citizens. It acts as a mirror reflecting the lived reality, but on the condition that it adheres to the principles of integrity and objectivity, seeking only the truth. This condition is only fulfilled when another crucial factor is present: freedom of expression and the independence of various media outlets, ensured by the legislation, laws, and practices in the country. Without these, the media can become a platform for government propaganda and policies, or it can be biased towards its funders or those who threaten it. Consequently, it becomes a tool for global misinformation and distorting facts (Al-Amiri, 2011, p. 23).

the independence and freedom of the media and journalism play a crucial and significant role in combating corruption and promoting good governance. They also have a strong and intrinsic relationship with democracy in the state and society.

4-Transparency: It means that public administrations or institutions operate in a transparent glass house, where everything inside is relatively exposed to both their employees and the general public. This includes systems through which the

management operates and the necessary means that ensure knowledge of the reality of its activities and operations, as well as providing advice, clarity, and thus the ability to hold them accountable (Al-Thoukhi, 2006, p. 185).

Third: The relation between democratic transition and good governance: The term "democracy" is often considered synonymous with good governance by many international and regional organizations due to the paramount importance of the democratic transition process in establishing the rule of law state. Democratic transition involves moving away from authoritarianism towards more liberal and democratic systems, which are essential for fostering good governance principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, inclusivity, and adherence to the rule of law.

-The relationship between democratic transition and good governance is important because democratic transitions aim to replace authoritarian rulers with elected officials, thereby fostering conditions conducive to good governance. During democratic transitions, societies strive to build systems based on accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, inclusivity, and adherence to the rule of law—the fundamental elements of good governance (springer, s.d.).

-As countries move through democratic transitions, they face numerous challenges, such as establishing effective institutions, ensuring the rule of law, and creating a culture of accountability. Technical assistance and training provided by international organizations and neighboring states can aid newly established democratic governments in navigating these complexities (wikipedia, s.d.).

-Moreover, civil society organizations play a vital role during democratic transitions by serving as bridges between communities and governments, thus facilitating a system of responsive governance that is a cornerstone of a stable and secure democratic society (usip, s.d.).

-However, democratic transitions are not always smooth, and success depends on factors like the ability to address economic transformation, defend against authoritarianism, and advance respect for human rights. Failures to implement structural reforms and address bad actors can lead to the loss of hard-won democratic gains.

-Therefore, sustained commitment to democratic values and continued investments in good governance are necessary to ensure lasting stability and growth (analysis, s.d.).

-There is a strong relation between the processes of democratic transition and good governance, both of which aim to achieve the overarching goal of comprehensive and sustainable development, with human development at the forefront. Democracy presupposes a minimum level of popular participation in the decision-making process, as it is a fundamental pathway to establishing accountability through the involvement of the masses in achieving it. Furthermore, the necessity of balancing good governance comes into play, as the development process can only be successful through convincing and persuading individuals of the importance and role of the developmental process in enhancing both the state and the citizen's prosperity and well-being.

Based on this foundation, good governance must be both formal and substantive, as it is governance by the people and for the people. This aligns with the essence of the democratic transition process, which is essentially for the people and ultimately for the benefit and interest of these people. It involves a shift from the idea of a single opinion to the majority represented by the popular base. Democracy is the governance of the people, by the people, and for the people, either directly or through representatives who act on their behalf in all their affairs and basic needs.

CONCLUSION:

The importance of this study lies in the reasons for failure and scientific analysis, as the study indicates that the democratic transition process can be harnessed to address and redirect various aspects of good governance, thereby encouraging the establishment of a comprehensive system of good governance that elevates the principles of citizenship and directs them towards civil cooperation and addressing multiple issues to work on developing the economic situation and enhancing social cohesion in line with the requirements of market stability and achieving food security.

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