

TOWARD A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

In the last decades, the concept of “good governance” has become very important in assessing the progresses of the developing countries. While some practitioners from international organizations have used the good governance as a working tool, scholars in social and political sciences have considered it as a “holistic approach” or a development paradigm. In the meantime, the concept of good governance has become “popular” within scientists, policymakers, bureaucrats, politicians, NGO’s activists, and within the so-called “international donor community”. This paper discusses the emergence of the concept of good governance from a sociological perspective, aiming to highlight the differences and similarities of international donor community (IDC) versus academia, by looking at the methods and techniques used to assess the performances of the developing countries. According to the World Bank, good governance is defined as the capacity of the government to manage a nation’s affaires, to provide economic development and welfare for citizens. IMF focuses on macro-economic and financial stability, expenditure control, budget management, revenue control. The UNDP’s emphasis is on participation and involvement of citizens in public policymaking process, reducing poverty, respect for human rights, and social protection for poor. Unlike the IDC’s approach and being inspired by Max Weber sociological writings, the academic approach of good governance is interesting about the implementing public policies through the exercise of power by political elites that decides what decision can be taken in a certain context. In addition, this paper offers a comparative approach of good governance based on World Bank’s Methodology with a focus on Romania after the admission to the European Union (2007).

Keywords: governance, good governance, democratic consolidation, methodology, cross-country statistical analysis

Résumé

Dernièrement, le concept de «bonne gouvernance» est devenu très important pour évaluer les progrès des pays en développement. Alors que les praticiens des organisations internationales utilise la bonne gouvernance comme un outil, les chercheurs ont considéré comme une approche holistique ou paradigme du développement. Pendant ce temps, le concept de bonne gouvernance est devenue populaire parmi les chercheurs, les décideurs politiques, les bureaucrates, les politiciens, militants d'ONG ou la soi-disant «communauté internationale des donateurs” (CID). Ce document traite de l'émergence de la notion de bonne gouvernance, visant à mettre en évidence les différences et les similitudes dans les approches par rapport CID académique, en se concentrant sur les méthodes et techniques qui évaluent la performance des pays en développement. Selon la Banque Mondiale, la bonne gouvernance est définie comme la capacité du gouvernement à gentiona affaires d'un

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pays, à produire le développement économique et le bien-être des citoyens. Les approches de la bonne gouvernance, le FMI se concentre sur la stabilité macro-économique et financière, le contrôle de la gestion des dépenses publiques, le budget et les dépenses sociales, la collecte des recettes de contrôle. Dans le même temps, le PNUD se intéresse à la participation et l'implication des citoyens dans le développement et la mise en œuvre des politiques publiques sur la réduction de la pauvreté et la protection sociale des personnes dans le besoin. Inspiré par le travail du sociologue Max Weber, approche académique à la bonne gouvernance analyser les mécanismes par lesquels les politiques publiques sont mises en œuvre comme un exercice de la puissance des élites politiques qui décident de ce qu'il faut faire et quand agir. En outre, le document fournit une analyse comparative de la bonne gouvernance basée sur la méthodologie de la Banque Mondiale ayant le feu des projecteurs la Roumanie après l'adhésion à l'UE (2007).

Mots-clés: le gouvernement, la bonne gouvernance, la consolidation démocratique, la méthodologie, l'analyse statistique nationale

Rezumat

În ultima perioadă, conceptul de “bună guvernare” a devenit foarte important în evaluarea progreselor înregistrate de țările în curs de dezvoltare. În timp ce practicienii din organizațiile internaționale utilizează buna guvernare ca instrument de lucru, cercetătorii au considerat-o ca o abordare holistică sau paradigmă a dezvoltării. Între timp, conceptul de bună guvernare a devenit popular printre cercetători, decidenți în materie de politici publice, birocrați, politicieni, activiști din ONG-uri sau din așa-numita “comunitate internațională a donatorilor” (CID). Lucrarea de față discută despre emergența conceptului de bună guvernare, propunându-și să sublinieze diferențele și similitudinile privind abordările CID *versus* mediul academic, punând accentul pe metodele și tehnicile prin care se evaluează performanțele țărilor în curs de dezvoltare. Conform Băncii Mondiale, buna guvernare este definită ca fiind capacitatea guvernului de a gestionarea afacerile unei țări, de a produce dezvoltare economică și bunăstare pentru cetățeni. În abordările privind buna guvernare, FMI se centrează pe stabilitatea macro-economică și financiară, pe controlul cheltuielilor publice, managementul bugetului de stat și al cheltuielilor sociale, pe controlul colectării veniturilor. În aceleași timp, UNDP este interesat de participarea și implicarea cetățenilor în procesul de elaborare și implementare a politicilor publice, pe reducerea sărăciei și protecția socială a persoanelor aflate în nevoie. Inspirată de lucrările sociologului Max Weber, abordarea academică a bunei guvernări analizează mecanismele prin care sunt implementate politicile publice ca exercițiu al puterii elitelor politice care decid cum să acționeze și când să acționeze. În plus, lucrarea oferă și o analiză comparativă a bunei guvernări bazată pe metodologia Băncii Mondiale având în centrul atenției România după momentul aderării la UE (2007).

Cuvinte cheie: guvernare, buna guvernare, consolidare democratică, metodologie, analiză statistică națională

1. Introduction: The Emergence of the Concept of Good Governance

The concept of “good governance” was used for the first time in the 1989 World Bank Report – *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth. A Long-Term Perspective Study*. This report represents a contribution to a process of

institutional dialog between researchers, public officials, private businessmen, representatives of the donor community and international NGOs by trying to provide an adequate response in terms of policies and programmes to meet Africa's developmental needs. The report also raises some questions about the way in which the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa have evolved after getting their independence, the lessons that could be learned from the implementation of structural reforms focused on economic growth, alleviation of poverty and protection of the vulnerable, and the prospects for the next African generations.

One of the major themes of this World Bank's report is that for the structural transformation of African economies they needed not only macroeconomic reforms and sustainable investments in infrastructure, but also the improvement of population's health and training of the human resources to be capable to support the institutional framework on the long-term. In this respect, Barber B. Conable, the former President of the World Bank, emphasized the fact that the weak economic performance in the past was due to the failure of the public institutions: "Private sector initiative and market mechanisms are important, but they must go hand in hand with good governance – a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to its public. And also a better balance between the government and the governed" (World Bank 1989, p. xii).

The term of "good governance" was used only in the WB President Conable's foreword. In the following pages of the report this term was avoided, probably, because it was not considered a neutral one from an axiological viewpoint. It can be observed that the term "governance" was rather preferred with a meaning of "the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs". Moreover, the term of governance was further developed in another WB's Publication – *Governance and Development* (1992). This study defined governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank 1992, p. 1).

Another WB's report used the term of governance in a more comprehensive manner: "Governance is epitomized by predictable, open, enlightened policy-making (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under de rule of law" (World Bank 1994, p. vii). This was the starting point for an international career of the term (good) governance. Nowadays, a lot of researchers in economics, sociology or political sciences, policymakers, public officials, representatives of the NGOs and international community – World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – use the term of good governance as a principle, concept, standard, or as a methodological instrument for assessing the social and economic progress and perspectives of the developing countries.

2. The Connection between Democracy and Good Governance

Good governance is a concept which is frequently associated with democratic consolidation as a process of implementing and developing the democracy as a political regime, culture and governance. It is quite difficult to appreciate if democratic consolidation precedes good governance or vice-versa. My point is that these two processes are going hand in hand. According to the World Bank's papers, there is a strong connection between democracy and good governance. The concept of good governance implies the functioning of the so-called "liberal democracy" which is an advanced step toward a consolidated democracy.

The democratic consolidation as process starts where the "electoral democracy" (minimal democracy) already operates, confirmed by passing the "test of the double alternation in power" (Huntington 1993) by organising and conducting fair and transparent elections, respecting the legislation in force. A consolidated democracy means more than competitive political parties that are running in free and legal elections with the possibility of alternation in power. Initially, the concept of "democratic consolidation" described the effort through which new democracies were trying to protect against the tendencies of return to the non-democratic regimes (Shedler 1998). Huan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) consider that a consolidated democracy should be instituted and legitimized through various appeals before the benefits of the market economy to materialize. In contrast to the two authors, Adam Przeworski (1996) considers that in the developing countries that left totalitarianism, the economic performance of the new democratic government is essential toward a consolidated democracy.

Democratic consolidation is a complex social and political process that presupposes respect for human rights, pluralism of opinions, a multiparty system, free elections, active civil society, independence of mass-media, democratic governance, independence of justice and effectiveness of the mechanisms of prevention and punishment of corruption. It is very difficult to speak about good governance without democratic consolidation. In this framework, good governance means the capacity of a consolidated democracy to provide economic growth, welfare, social inclusion and protection of the poor (Iftimoaei 2013, pp. 5-30).

In the specialized literature there are assumptions according to which there is no automatic connection between democracy and development or, in other words, between democratic consolidation and good governance (*see*, Asiminei 2013, pp. 223-229). In this respect, resources of the state are managed in such a manner as to achieve some social and economic goals for most of the people without any democratic progress. Nowadays, a lot of scholars indicate China as a developed country which combines two systems: the centralized state capitalism based on a free market economy and a single party system with a unique ideology. In this respect, Francis Fukuyama (2003) states: "An authoritarian regime can be well governed just as a democracy can be mal-administrated". The *Table 1* summarizes the differences and similarities between the process of democratic consolidation and good governance.

Table 1. *Democracy & Good Governance: Common and Specific Characteristics*

Common characteristics	Specific characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting individual liberties; - pluralism and equity; - rule of law; - human rights protection; - non-discriminatory laws; - free press; - independence of justice; - efficient mechanisms for fighting against corruption; - efficient, impartial and rapid judicial processes; - openness in policy-making process; - meaningful participation of citizens in debating public policies and choices; - accountability of the political elites in decision-making process; - civil control of army forces; - political stability. 	<p><i>Democratic consolidation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multiparty system; - free and competitive elections; - active civil society; - independent media; - democratic governance; - consensually united elites.
	<p><i>Good governance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - efficiency and effectiveness in delivering public services; - accountable public administration; - expenditure control; - inclusive social protections mechanisms; - budget management and revenue control; - predictable or stable macroeconomic policies; - sustainable protection measures for the environment.

Good governance has to do with quality of management of the public sector or the business administration in multinational corporations. Otherwise, good governance means effectiveness and efficiency in performing key functions, delivering quality services, clarity and openness of decision-making, accountability. In short, good governance means the public officials' capacity to achieve the tasks, to work client-oriented and deliver higher quality services, or to get profit. This viewpoint does not mean that moral principles, values and norms are exempted from good governance as a managerial approach of public and business administration. Therefore, good governance is applicable to all sections of society such as politics, government, justice, media, private realm, corporate sector, trade unions, NGOs. Public accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in management are as relevant for one as for the other.

3. Approaches of Good Governance: International Donor Community *versus* Academia

In the following lines I will discuss some definitions of the term “good governance” as they appeared in the international community’s working papers and the academia. The international community’s approach (so-called “donor

community”) emphasises the role played by the (central) government and political elite in ensuring a democratic framework and political stability for implementing the public policy with the purpose of economic prosperity, social equity and accountability through transparent decision-making processes. The *Table 2* represents the good governance’s approaches (International Donor Community *versus* Academia) related to the institutions that are concerned by implementing of good governance.

Table 2. Good Governance’s Approaches

Approaches	Institutions
International Development/ Donor Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Bank (WB) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) - United Nations Developing Programme (UNDP) - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - European Commission (EC) - International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGs).
<i>Academic Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universities, - Institutes on (Good) Governance - Research Policy Units, - Think-tanks: Freedom House, Transparency International, Heritage Foundation, Amnesty International.

As we can notice, for the World Bank good governance is the capacity of the government to manage a nation’s affairs and involves the following aspects: an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to fight against corruption, the accountable administration of public funds, an independent public auditor, accountable political elites, respect for the rule of law and human rights, a pluralistic institutional structure and free press (World Bank 1997).

The International Monetary Fund articulated its approach on (good) governance in 1997 when it published a paper called *Good Governance: The IMF’s Role*. The involvement of this international institution in promoting good governance is focused in two areas. The first area concerns the improvement of the management of public resources through a set of reforms and policies covering major sector institutions (treasury, central bank, public enterprises, civil service, statistics), including administrative procedures (expenditure control, budget management, revenue collection). The second IMF’s involvement area emphasizes the maintenance of a transparent and stable economic and regulatory environment necessary for the private sector (price system, exchange and trade regimes, banking system and their related regulations) (IMF 1997, p. 3).

Another institution of the international donor community is United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which uses a broad definition comparing with the above mentioned institutions (WB and IMF). UNDP defines good governance as the exercise of state authority in all the major sectors – social, economic, financial, political and administrative – to manage a country’s affairs at the national, regional and local levels taking into account the supranational regulations (e.g. for the European member countries). Also, good governance implies citizen’s involvement and participation in social and political life, transparent public decisions, accountability of the political elites, and respect for the rules of law, effective and equitable distribution of the public resources (UNDP 1997, p. 3).

According to Rachel M. Gisselquist’s paper on good governance (2012), other organizations, like the United Nations, European Union, and OECD, are more likely to highlight democratic governance and human rights, aspects of political governance avoided by the World Bank. Some of the many issues that are treated under the governance programmes of various donors include election monitoring, political party support, fighting corruption, building an independent judicial system, security sector reform, improved service delivery, transparency of government accounts, decentralization, civil and political rights, government responsiveness and ‘forward vision’, and the stability of the regulatory environment for private sector activities (including price systems, exchange regimes, and banking systems). The European Union is interested in promoting good governance along two approaches. First, EU seeks to use good governance as a political and administrative foreign policy instrument in allocating the financial resources and aid for under developing countries. Second, the channels used by the EU to enforce good governance – intergovernmental versus transnational level – depend on every state that needs aid. As a foreign policy instrument, good governance is based on several methods like political dialogues, (positive) conditionality and technical assistance (Börzel, Pamuk and Stahn 2008).

The academic approach is inspired by Max Weber’s sociological writings and is focused on the study of different ways in which power and authority relations are structured in a given society. The academic approach focuses on implementing public policy through the exercise of power by the political elite that decides what decisions can be taken in a certain context. In this respect, the term of “governance” is almost always associated with the government, administration or bureaucracy. This weberian approach should be treated in the spirit of “axiological neutrality”. In Weber’s view, bureaucracy is a collection of institutions, regulations and procedures organised in a hierarchical system in which specialised and well trained people (bureaucrats, public servants) are working to deliver public or private services in an efficient manner according with certain quality standards. Similarly, good governance is a system in which policymakers based on an appropriate institutional design are working together to implement decisions according to citizen’s expectations or to accomplish certain standards.

Within the academic approach I mention a notable theoretical contribution of good governance that belongs to Jon Pierre and B. Guy Peters who wrote about the emergence of the new governance: “the new governance we suggest, does indeed represent something new and different compared to the traditional system of government at the same time as the basic rational or the *raison d’etre* of the state to promote and pursue the collective interests. The new governance, we retire, does not mean the and or decline of the state but the transformation and adaptation of the state to the society it is currently embedded in” (Pierre and Peters 2000, p. 68). The new governance means good governance as paradigm based on new public administration or public sector management that capitalize the experiences gained from business and corporate sector. Nevertheless, the academic approach contains a criticism of how good governance is used by international donor community and its agencies. In this sense, Goran Hyden remarks an unsatisfactory state of thinking about the way in which the concept of good governance gets translated into practice or used as an instrument for assessing the progresses of the developing countries that request the intervention and support programs from the donor agencies.

4. Measurement of good governance. The World Bank’s Methodology

Before discussing about the methods, techniques and indicators involved in the measurement of good governance, it is necessary to stress the fact that the World Bank provides economic assistance to the developing countries that need mainly financial aid based on the fulfilment of certain conditions expressed in terms of state reform (democracy and democratization), economic market reform (functional and competitive capitalistic economy), strength of civil society. The World Bank’s officials have often stated that in order to be effective, the state should play a key role in managing economic and social reforms. In addition, political elites (governors, Members of Parliament, party leaders) must prove that they have political will to implement the structural reforms agreed with the WB aimed at economic growth and reducing poverty in society.

The measurement of good governance is related to the development issue. Scholars in international relations and development studies searched various methodologies (methods, techniques, indicators) to assess the capacity of the state to manage its internal affairs. Marilee S. Grindle realizes that there is a gap between the theoretical and normative dimension of good governance and its practical aspects. Her paper *Good Enough Governance Revisited* represents a step forward to “classical” approaches trying to bridge what can be learned from theoretical and normative perspective and what can be put in practice as a measurement instrument and/or intervention instrument to solve certain problems of the developing countries. Regarding this approach, she affirms that “Good enough governance as a concept is not sufficient for guiding practice” (Grindle 2007, p. 554).

In the literature dedicated to the development studies there are two methodologies for measurement of good governance: 1) the large cross-country statistical analysis focuses on the relations between good governance and political and social-economic development; 2) country case studies based on comparative analysis of a limited number of countries to find common or different characteristics and to learn from their historical experiences.

The first methodology known as “Large-N cross-national research” is the most influential in the study of good governance; it is developed by Daniel Kaufmann and his collaborators, and it is currently used by the World Bank in a database called the *Worldwide Governance Indicators* (WGI). Since 1996, the WGI have been instrumental in enabling governance research, fostering debate and controversies, and raising awareness about the role of good governance issues in the development community and beyond: “The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) are a long-standing research project to develop cross-country indicators of governance. The WGI consist of six composite indicators of broad dimensions of governance covering over 200 countries since 1996: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption (*Table 1*). These indicators are based on several hundred variables obtained from 31 different data sources, capturing governance perceptions as reported by survey respondents, nongovernmental organizations, commercial business information providers, and public sector organizations worldwide” (Kaufmann *et. al.* 2010, p. 4).

Table 3. The Six Key Worldwide Governance Indicators

1) Voice and Accountability	2) Political Stability and Absence of Violence	3) Government Effectiveness
The extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.	The likelihood that the government will be destabilized by unconstitutional or violent means, including terrorism.	The quality of public services, the capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures; and the quality of policy formulation.
4) Regulatory Quality	5) Rule of Law	6) Control of Corruption
The ability of the government to provide sound policies and regulations enables and promote private sector development.	The extent in which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, including the quality of contract enforcement and property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.	The extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as “capture” of the state by elites and private interests.

Source: *Worldwide Governance Indicators*, World Bank Institute, 2009 (www.govindicators.org).

The data behind the WGI demonstrated that good governance is essential for development. Moreover, this strong relation between good governance and development has enforced demand for permanent monitoring and assessment of the quality of governance across countries and within country in a determined period of time. Using WGI we are able to evaluate the quality of a country's governance in comparison with other countries and over time. To avoid a false sense of precision about small differences between countries comprised in comparative analyses, the WGI provide margins of error that indicate the likely scores for each country taken into account. Although such imprecision is present in all attempts to measure governance, it is rarely acknowledged explicitly as it is in the WGI (Kaufmann *et. al.* 2010, pp. 2-3).

According to the WGI's authors D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay and M. Mastruzzi, these six dimensions of governance represented in the above table should be thought of as being interconnected with each other: "One might reasonably think for example that better accountability mechanisms lead to less corruption, or that a more effective government can provide a better regulatory environment, or that respect for the rule of law leads to fairer processes for selecting and replacing governments and less abuse of public office for private gain. In the light of such interrelationships, it is not very surprising that our six composite measures of governance are strongly positively correlated across countries" (Kaufmann *et. al.* 2010, p. 5).

In the WGI project, the authors rely exclusively on perceptions based governance data sources that include surveys made by academic research institutes, survey firms, think-tanks, NGOs, aid donor agencies, commercial business information providers, and public institutions. These include the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, the Institute for Management Development's World Competitiveness Yearbook, the World Bank / EBRD's Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Surveys, the Gallup World Poll, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Insight, and Political Risk Services, Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, Transparency International and so on.

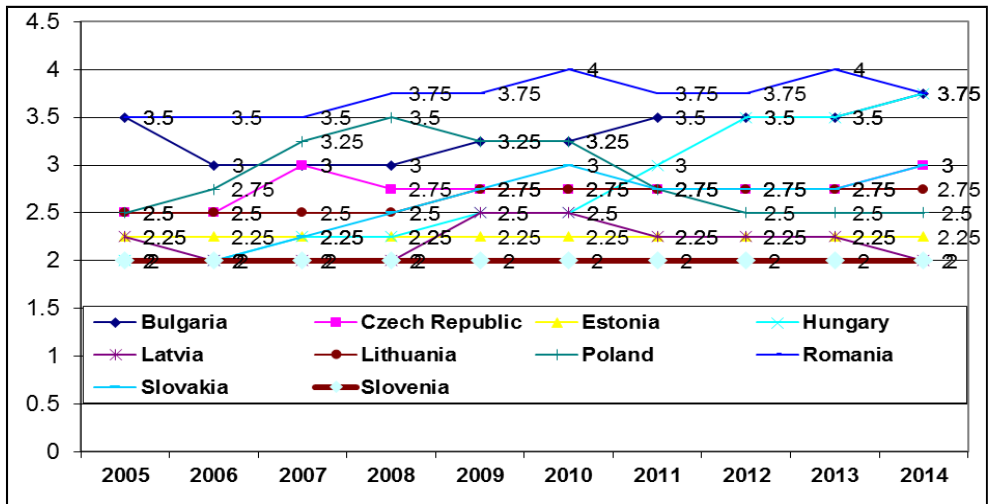
These data provide a set of empirical indicators for every dimension of governance taken into analysis. The reports based on these analyses serve as a tool for decision-makers of the international donor community in delivering the financial assistance to the developing countries. The ability to measure progress on key indicators of governance such as rule of law, corruption, voice and accountability enabled aid donor institutions to exercise a continuous pressing on the country's government to implement structural reforms toward improving the quality of life and reducing poverty.

5. The Romania's Road from Democratic Consolidation to Good Governance

The process of democratic consolidation involves stages that differ from one historical context to another and from one country to another. These stages can be graphically represented on an axis that begins with the moment of collapse of an undemocratic regime, continues with the stage of transition to electoral democracy, and then liberal democracy, finally leading to the stage called consolidated democracy or advanced democracy. The advanced democracy is clearly not the final stage of democratic consolidation, but it represents a benchmark that corresponds to the way that the western democracies are functioning.

It is obvious that a consolidated democracy depends on how the political elites are governing or whether the government is focused on promoting good governance. In his paper “Democracy and its critics”, Robert A. Dahl formulated the following criteria of democratic governance: 1) effective participation of citizens in public policymaking process; 2) equality of votes in the decisive stage, which means that every citizen has ensured equal opportunity to express an opinion that will be treated with the same importance as other citizen's opinion; 3) an enlightened understanding that means the decision-making procedural alternatives should be reported to the possibilities of citizens to harness the means and goals of political activity by both first personal interests and for other persons; 4) the control of the public agenda whose problems must receive democratic solutions; 5) the inclusion of all citizens who meet the legal conditions in the democratic process. According to Dahl, in real life there are not government systems that fully meet the criteria listed above (Dahl 2002, pp. 151-165). To assess the governance of a state, these criteria should be used in a normative register rather than an empirical one.

Democratic consolidation is a process mainly focused on achieving political standards: free and fair elections, independent media, democratic governance (rule of law, efficiency, transparency, truth in the allocation and spending of public funds, equidistance), civil society, independent judiciary system, efficient fight against corruption. For the EU member countries or for those aspiring to obtain the EU membership, these standards are known under the name of “Copenhagen political criteria”: the existence of stable institutions that would guarantee the functioning of democracy, the supremacy of the law, the respect for human rights and the protection of minorities. According to Freedom House – *The Nations in Transit* (2005-2014), of all the post-communist countries that joined the EU (2005; 2009), Romania obtained the lowest scores in terms of democratic governance. The *Figure 1* illustrates the evolution of the democratic governance in Romania compared with ten Eastern-European countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) in the reference period of 2005-2014.



Source: author's diagram processed according to the data taken from the Reports of Freedom House – *Nations in Transit*: www.freedomhouse.org.

Note: countries are rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of governance progress.

Figure 1. *The evolution of democratic governance in ten post-communist countries*

Romania has made some progress in terms of democratic governance in the period between 2005, after joining NATO, and 2007, until accession to the EU. During this period, the government led by Prime-Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu brought slight improvements of governance which was rated with 3.5 points. The economic growth that characterized that period was based on the increasing of the real estate market and the consumer generated by the money sent home by Romanians working in Europe. The government continued to lead through the so-called Government Emergency Ordinances (O.U.G.) undermining Parliament's legislative powers. The governance was seriously affected during the period of 2005-2007 by the political conflict between President Traian Băsescu and Prime-Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu. The President placed himself in a critical position towards Government and Prim-Minister. Therefore, the political conflict within executive power culminated when the Democratic Party – the presidential party – left the governmental coalition in April 2007. Another moment of political conflict is represented by the suspension of the President by the Parliament in May 2007, without a clear notice of the Constitutional Court of Romania, followed by the referendum on the President's dismissal. The results of this referendum reaffirmed the popular support for the President Traian Băsescu and extended the political crisis until 2008.

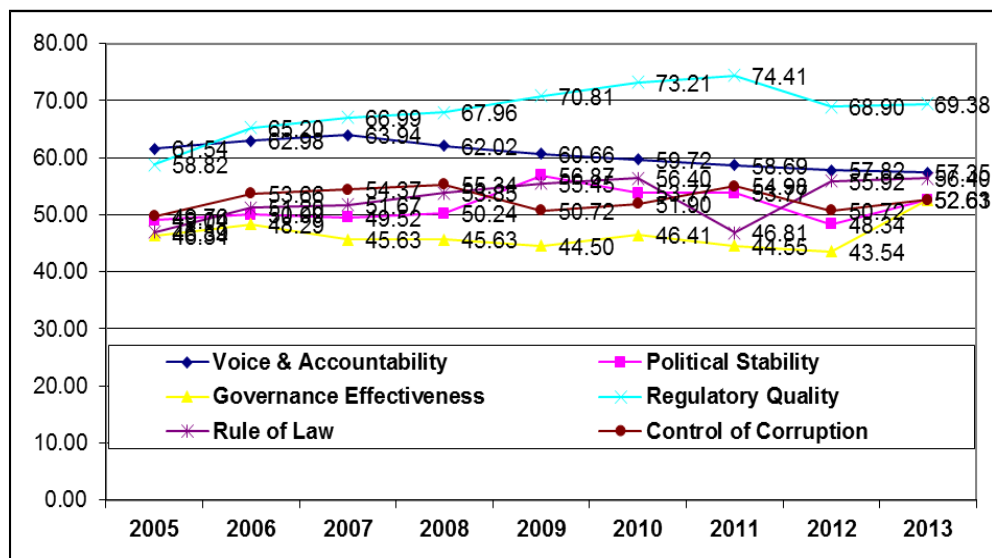
After becoming a member of the EU in January, 2007, Romania has encountered a process of so-called “democratic erosion” and, therefore,

degradation of the quality of governance. The most critical years of the post EU accession are 2010 and 2013. Like other EU countries, Romania was severely affected by the global economic crisis triggered in 2008, whose effects we still feel today. The Prime-Minister Emil Boc (2009-2012) was forced to implement an austerity package of economic and financial policies for adjusting the budget deficit and other macro-economic parameters. This period was characterized by the economic decline and the population had to bear the burden of reducing wages and other social benefits. Facing a tense social situation that threatened to degenerate in public disorder and street fights between protesters and police forces, the government led by Emil Boc submitted its mandate.

The President nominated Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, director of the Foreign Intelligence Service to form a new cabinet. The nominated Prime-Minister received the vote of investiture in February 2012, but he lost the parliamentary support two months later (May 2012) as a result of an impeachment motion submitted by the opposition which also received the support of some Parliament members who had previously supported the governmental coalition.

A parliamentary majority comprising the Social Democratic Party (PSD), National Liberal Party (PNL), National Union of the Romania Progress (UNPR) and the parliamentary group of the minorities supported the investiture of the Social Liberal Union (USL) government led by the PSD's President Victor Ponta. After his installation in office, USL started the negotiations with the IMF to reduce the burden of austerity measures for reducing the accumulated social tensions. Despite a stable parliamentary majority, made up of about 70% of MPs, the Government led by Prime Minister Victor Ponta has failed so far to promote public policies that generate welfare for most citizens. In addition, Social Democratic Party led by Victor Ponta is constantly criticized because of its attitude towards corruption of higher public officials: ministries, MPs, higher public servants. However, the lack of good governance continues to remain a serious problem of Romania after accession to the EU. The evolution of good governance in Romania in the period of 2005-2007 is illustrated in *Figure 2*, a diagram based on those six WGI described in the previous section of this paper (WB Methodology).

According to the WGI's methodology, there are two aggregate indicators that describe the process by which the government is selected, monitored and replaced: 1) voice and accountability (PA) and 2) political stability and absence of violence or terrorism (PV). PA means the respecting of civil liberties: citizens are able to participate in elections, as electors or candidates; freedom of expression; freedom of association; free media. PV aggregate indicator measures the perception regarding governmental stability, whether the government can be destabilised or overthrown by any unconstitutional mean (see the *Figure 2 – Good Governance's Evolution of Perception in Romania: 2005-2013*).



Source: author's diagram processed according to the data of the *Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)*, www.govindicators.org.

Note: The WGI are a research dataset summarizing the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. The WGI do not reflect the official views of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent.

Figure 2. *Good Governance's Evolution of Perception in Romania: 2005-2013*

Referring to the Post-Communist Romania, the elections were organised without any political or administrative restrictions. Also, the electoral process did not encountered severe problems in such a way that the results being significantly affected. Beginning with the first electoral process developed in May 1990, politicians have been accused each other by embezzlements in elections. Moreover, the accusations publicly formulated have been investigated by the authorities empowered by law, but there was no conviction regarding institutions or public officials that have organised the elections until now. In the whole post-communist period there were many changes to the electoral law with less than 12 months before the effective organization of the electoral process despite the recommendations of the Venice Commission that considered them as being against the “democratic game”. Probably, the most controversial change of the electoral law was happened during the pre-electoral campaign for presidency of Romania. The Government led by Prim-Minister Victor Ponta promoted a governmental urgency ordinance (O.U.G. no. 55/2014) which permitted to the presidents of county councils, county counsellors, mayors and local counsellors to leave the political parties on the electoral lists where elected to the governmental party (PSD). The political parties from Opposition appealed this governmental urgency ordinance

at the Constitutional Court of Romania that afterwards declared it as being unconstitutional.

The free media needs to operate in a legal framework guaranteed by the functioning of rule of law and civil liberties within a competitive market economy without any political interferences or private monopolies managed by business and/or political interests. In the same time, the independent media excludes any political implications in the editorial activity and involves an environment in which journalists and editorial boards respect the laws, and the code of ethics and deontology. In Romania, even after the admission to the UE (2007), the National Council of Audio-Visual operates in a subjective manner, acting severely against some broadcasting companies and being tolerate with other media's excesses. The excess of Media freedom represents a serious problem for the democratic consolidation process of Romania and, on the long term, it will affect the good governance. There is a perception within community of national security that the media's excesses (disinformation, manipulation of public opinion and propaganda) corroborated with non-transparent interests, politically and economically motivated represent a threat to the national security of Romania. This issue is mentioned in the Strategy of National Security adopted by Supreme Council for National Security in 2006. There is a fact that, in Romania, an important part of mass-media is controlled by economical groups with strong political interests related to the so-called "media moguls".

Before admission to EU, Romania had a period of political stability with the maximum level in 2009 when an over-majority parliamentary coalition formed by Liberal Democrat Party (PDL) and Social Democrat Party (PSD) – almost 70% seats in Parliament – came into power. This political moment coincides with the beginning of global economical crisis's effects throughout Europe. The up-coming presidential election in autumn of 2009 represented the erosion starting point of the political stability in Post-EU Accession Romania. The political instability lasted until May 2012 when a parliamentary coalition formed around Social Liberal Union (USL) succeeded in passing an impeachment motion against the Government led by Prim-Minister Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, the former director of Romanian Foreign Intelligence Service. After the parliamentary election in November 2012, a governmental coalition based on a large parliamentary majority around USL was taken control of executive power. This was a period of political stability despite of cohabitation between the President Traian Basescu and Prim-Minister Victor Ponta which has prolonged after the presidential election in November 2014 when right wing candidate Klaus Iohannis won the electoral battle and became the first German ethnic president of Romania.

Another important dimension of good governance is represented by the capacity of the government to formulate and implement sound public policies. This dimension is expressed through two aggregate indicators: 1) government effectiveness (GE) that measures the perception of the quality of public services

and the degree of independence from political and the credibility of the government's commitment to those policies; 2) regulatory quality (RQ) that captures the perception of the quality of public policymaking process toward the private sector development. The GE in Romania has slowly decreased after accession to UE (2007) and has remained relatively stable until now. The RQ has certainly the most significant positive evolution in Post-Accession to EU of Romania varying between 67.0 p.p. in 2007 and 74.4 p.p. in 2011.

The third dimension of good governance is reflecting the way in which the citizens and the state interacting taking into account the rule of law and control of corruption. The two aggregate indicators described by the WB's Methodology are the following: 1) rule of law (RL) expresses the perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts; 2) control of corruption (CC) as the perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private purposes, including "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. In the case of Romania there is the "Co-operation and Verification Mechanism" (CVM/ MCV) agreed by the Government and the European Commission in December 2006 until the judicial reform will succeeded and fight against corruption and organized crime will provide significant results. The same mechanism is applied for Bulgarian and it is conditioning the entering of both countries in the Schengen space. The European Commission's decision to assess ongoing progresses made by Romania and Bulgaria shows the commitment to monitor effective administrative and judicial reforms to reduce the impact of corruption on economic development and societal security. There is a statistical association between the level of economical development and the level of corruption. The CVM is considered by the European Commission and many Member States as playing an important role in the consolidation of the rule of law in Romania as a key facet of European integration (*MCV Report 2015*, p. 2). Regarding the fight against corruption, the CVM recommended to Romania the improving the collection of statistics on effective asset recovery, to take preventive and repressive actions against of conflict of interests, fraud and corruption in public procurement and to implement all these measures including for the low level of corruption or for the low level of public administration (*MCV Report 2015*, p. 13).

6. Conclusions

From a sociological approach, the concept of good governance can be operationalized in two main dimensions: 1) normative dimension which comprises principle, values and standards that are guiding the international donor community, national governments, business corporations or NGOs in assessing their own performances or the progresses made by developing countries and 2) descriptive dimension descriptive dimension which refers to the practical aspects of implementing the good governance's standards as structural reforms, policies,

programmes and interventions projects aiming to provide macro-economic and financial stability and economic growth, to reduce poverty and to protect peoples that need help or are in risk situations, to improve the quality of public or private services working beneficiaries/citizens oriented.

In this paper the emphasis was mainly targeted to the descriptive (empirical) dimension of good governance using the World Bank's Methodology as a statistical analysis based on aggregate indicators that reflect the perception the six key issues of good governance: voice and accountability, political stability and control of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. According to the *Figure 2*, Romania faces a serious problem related to the government effectiveness which do not registered any significant improvement after admission in the EU as a full member state (2007-2013). This perception is amplified by the fact that a lot of things in Romania depend on what the Government decides to do or not to do.

The Romanian political elite is still playing an important role in democratic consolidation. Romania continues to be a semi-consolidated democracy, according to Freedom House (2014) and other international organisations. The lack of good governance remains rather a perspective goal than a working tool in day-to-day government's activity. There are few initiatives promoted by the civil society and NGOs sector that aim to initiate public-private partnerships (PPPs) for implementing the good governance's standards not only in governmental sector but for the private sector. Moreover, the bureaucracy in Romania does not have many things in common with the good governance's standards and practice. Therefore, the public servants are not interesting to work oriented to the beneficiary's needs and to provide feedback regarding the quality of public services. The mass-media is focused on scandals that increase the public audience than in the way in which the quality of citizen's life can be improved by implementing the principles of good governance. There is no real partnership between the government, private sector and media concerning good governance.

The process of democratic consolidation must go hand in hand with the implementation of good governance. In this respect, the pressure of fighting against corruption can play a key role in changing of the Romanian political elite toward a consensually elite united around the democratic values and good governance's standards. The attitude of civil society, mass-media and public intellectuals can provide a sustainable support of this changing process and push forward to a deepen reform of the whole Romanian society.

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