



Global Quality Ranking of Democracies: Pilot Ranking 2000

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Introduction

Based on the "Feasibility Study for a Quality Ranking of Democracies (2002, edited by Campbell and Sükösd)", a "Pilot Ranking 2000" was carried out during the first half of 2003 and completed in August 2003. The original feasibility study developed a comprehensive model for a quantitative and indicator-based global quality ranking of democracies, conceptually using six dimensions, proposing furthermore a whole set of indicators, and indicating sources of data availability. The pilot ranking followed closely the indicator logic of the feasibility study, however, introduced some moderate indicator modifications where appropriate or necessary.

We present the pilot ranking as a practical application of the basic ideas and concepts as developed by the feasibility study. *The main interest here is to rank all democracies globally, according to the quality of democracy.* For that purpose we decided to place the democracies on a comprehensive ranking scale, ranging from 0 to 100 (with 100 marking the most favorable ranking position). Already in the feasibility study we pointed in detail toward the manifold problems and almost unsolvable paradoxes, arising from such an interest. Therefore, from a professional point of view we want to present the pilot ranking as an input for discussion. The term "pilot" should emphasize that the current ranking results ought to be regarded as conceptual work in progress, and that we welcome critique and feedback, so that we can learn and improve our approach. The underlying logic of our model, however, we do not want to alter: measuring the quality of democracy empirically, quantitatively and indicator-based. We believe that the presentation of "preliminary" ranking results should not be unnecessarily withheld: this would not support conceptual and methodic learning. Furthermore, a global ranking of the quality of democracies feeds into the discourses about democracy and links to practical and democracy-related policy issues, such as: How can democracies be reformed and how can they improve their quality?

The current work was supervised and edited by David Campbell and Miklós Sükösd. The whole scientific project team consisted of David Campbell, Miklós Sükösd, Georg Pözlbauer and Annamaria Preisz. Miklós Sükösd was primarily responsible for the political system and environmental sustainability dimensions, and David Campbell for the other four dimensions: gender equality, economic system, knowledge, and health.

The pilot ranking 2000 is presented twofold: First, as a comprehensive data file, indicating the comprehensive ranking results and the ranking outcome for each dimension as well as the specific indicator input for all dimensions. Second, we compiled a short text document that provides

supplementary overview information for the current ranking exercise.

Toward the end of the year 2003 we will assess presenting a revised and updated pilot ranking 2000 (learning from critique and feedback). By mid-2004 already a (pilot) ranking 2002 should be performed. This would add an important temporal perspective, allowing to analyze which democracies improved (or did not improve) the ranking position of their quality. Every second year the global ranking exercise of the quality of democracies should be repeated.

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The pilot ranking 2000 is based on the following conceptual and methodic framework:¹

1. One global ranking: The pilot ranking presents a comprehensive global quality ranking of *all democracies* (and not specific rankings for different country clusters). Pragmatically it was decided to position the first ranking democracy at "100", and the lowest ranking democracy at "0". Thus the whole comprehensive ranking scale extends from 0 until 100. For six specific dimensions, which feed into the comprehensive and aggregated scale, also individual rankings are displayed.² This fosters a differentiating discussion.
2. Selection of covered countries: Our sample of democracies consists of 100 countries. Countries, classified by Freedom House³ as "free" or at least as "partly free" during the whole years 1997-98 until 2000-01, are covered. Additional conditions for sample inclusion are: a population of at least 1,000,000 and regular coverage by World Bank indicators.⁴ We did not include Macao and Taiwan, because the World Bank does not report about these countries in the World Development Indicators publication. Furthermore, we also excluded Hong Kong and Puerto Rico, since they are classified as related territories by Freedom House.
3. Dimensions and their weighting factors: The global quality ranking of democracies is based on six dimensions and represents a composite aggregate of these. For the final overall ranking the following weighting factors are assigned to the individual dimensions: politics (political system) 50%; gender (gender equality) 10%; economy (economic system) 10%; knowledge (knowledge-based information soci-

¹) For further details see again: "Feasibility Study for a Quality Ranking of Democracies (2002, edited by Campbell and Sükösd)".

²) The same applies to the "comprehensive gender dimension", our so-called seventh dimension.

³) <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

⁴) <http://www.worldbank.org>

- ety, education and research) 10%; health (health system) 10%; and environment (environmental sustainability) 10%.
4. Constrained and comprehensive gender dimensions: The gender dimension reads as a “constrained” dimension, because we decided to assign political indicators, that relate to gender and thus are gender-sensitive, to the political dimension. Therefore the gender dimension reflects the gender equality of primarily educational and economic indicators. Anticipating a possible criticism against such an approach, we also designed and composed a “comprehensive” gender equality dimension, consisting of the constrained (education and economybased) gender equality dimension and those political indicators that are “genderized” or have a potential gender effect.⁵ The ranking results of the comprehensive gender dimension are presented in parallel. This comprehensive gender dimension does not impact the final and global quality ranking (because of reasons to prevent double counting disturbances), however, it should deliver more balanced information about the important issue of gender equality in global comparison.⁶
 5. Dimension-specific weighting factors of indicators: To each dimension several indicators are assigned: indicators represent quantitative, data-based variables. Normally, dimension-internally, the indicators are not weighted differently. However, in some cases we decided to opt for varying weighting factors, emphasizing differences of importance (that also can be conceptually justified).⁷
 6. Value assignments of “0 until 100” for all indicators (variables): Every dimension-specific indicator (variable) is transformed into a value range from 0 until 100. The highest ranking country – for each indicator – receives a “100” value, the lowest ranking only a “0”. A high (or highest) ranking should coincide with a performance or attribute that supports the quality of a democracy. Furthermore, the “natural distribution” of values is symmetrically reflected by the transformed (0-100) values. The average of the transformed indicators determinates the dimension-specific ranking of a democratic country. Aggregated, the combined average values across all dimensions determine the overall global quality ranking of a democracy.⁸
 7. Covered years (averages for 1998-1999): Empirically the pilot ranking 2000 is based on the average values of the two years 1998 and 1999. Two-year average values combine two advantages: First, they stabilize ranking results. Second, they still are sensitive for short-term changes (so that fluctuations can impact ranking positions instantly). In cases, where no (one or two-year) values existed in the sources we used for the period 1998-1999, the latest available values were taken (however, never before 1990).
 8. Estimation procedure for missing data (How to deal with missing quantitative information?): In those rare cases where for some countries and for some indicators no data were available for the whole extended 1990-1999 time period, we applied a three-step procedure within the context of each dimension. First, for each indicator (variable) the existing data were transformed into the value range of 0-100, ignoring the missing data. Second, for each country a dimension-specific average value was calculated, based on the existing data of the indicators. The country average value, thirdly, was inserted for all the missing data for all indicators of that country. Thus we used dimension-specific average values for compensating missing data information.
 9. Key data sources: Frequently we referred to the following three key sources for the data input of our pilot ranking; Freedom House and its freedom country ratings; World Bank and its CD-ROM product “World Development Indicators 2001”; and successive volumes of the “Political Handbook of the World”.⁹
 10. Purpose of the pilot ranking 2000: The main purpose by content is to rank globally the quality of all democracies for a predefined period of years (the late 1990s), relying on a specific conceptual and methodic model that is based on quantitative indicators. The results of the ranking outcome we present as a contribution for discussion about democracy, democracy quality and democracy awareness. Furthermore, by repeating a (pilot) ranking for a different (two-year) period, it should be possible to compare and document changes of ranking placements of the quality of democracy over time.¹⁰

⁵⁾ Internally, within the comprehensive gender dimension, both indicator groups are equally weighted with 50%: the educational and economic indicators on the one hand, and the political gender indicators.

⁶⁾ Therefore the comprehensive gender dimension could be interpreted as the “seventh” dimension of our model.

⁷⁾ The comprehensive data file always documents the dimension-internal weighting factors of each indicator.

⁸⁾ Because of massive economic data missings we averaged, in the case of Bosnia, the ranking placing of the knowledge and health dimensions to substitute for the ranking placing of the economic dimension.

⁹⁾ See for example: Arthur S. Banks / Thomas C. Muller (eds.) (2003). Political Handbook of the World, 2000-2002: Governments and Intergovernmental Organizations as of March 1, 2000, or later, with Major Political Developments noted through June 1, 2002. New York: CSA Publications.

¹⁰⁾ This serves furthermore as an information input for forwarding every second year the GDA (Global Democracy Award) to these democracies that achieved the greatest (ranking) improvement of the quality of their democracy (<http://www.global-democracy-award.org>).



The Numerical Scoreboard

Rank	Democracy	Score
1	Norway	100.00
2	Sweden	99.76
3	Denmark	90.95
4	Finland	90.82
5	Switzerland	86.95
6	Netherlands	86.20
7	Canada	86.09
8	United States	84.57
9	New Zealand	83.77
10	Australia	83.60
11	Austria	82.26
12	United Kingdom	79.25
13	Germany	79.04
14	France	77.82
15	Ireland	77.16
16	Portugal	76.55
17	Japan	74.57
18	Belgium	72.79
19	Slovenia	70.03
20	Spain	69.13
21	Czech Republic	67.30
22	Israel	66.96
23	Korea, Rep.	66.42
24	Italy	66.34
25	Estonia	65.51
26	Hungary	65.06
27	Lithuania	64.65
28	Poland	62.87
29	Costa Rica	62.67
30	Latvia	62.60
31	Mauritius	61.80
32	Chile	61.29
33	Uruguay	60.95
34	Greece	59.78
35	Slovak Republic	59.48
36	Sri Lanka	58.84
37	Trinidad and Tobago	54.69
38	Romania	53.67
39	Panama	53.50
40	South Africa	53.10
41	Singapore	52.22
42	Bulgaria	51.81
43	Thailand	51.35
44	Philippines	50.46
45	Botswana	49.49
46	Jamaica	49.36
47	Dominican Republic	48.05
48	Bolivia	44.99
49	Suriname	44.63
50	Nicaragua	44.40

Rank	Democracy	Score
51	Brazil	43.93
52	Croatia	43.67
53	Benin	43.65
54	Papua New Guinea	43.08
55	Moldova	42.83
56	Ukraine	42.41
57	Ecuador	41.99
58	Georgia	41.88
59	Bangladesh	41.45
60	Venezuela, RB	41.38
61	Mongolia	40.31
62	Paraguay	40.22
63	Argentina	39.85
64	Colombia	39.58
65	Armenia	38.64
66	Macedonia, FYR	37.78
67	El Salvador	37.70
68	Honduras	37.59
69	Mexico	37.05
70	Russian Federation	35.59
71	Albania	35.24
72	Madagascar	35.18
73	Turkey	32.79
74	Mali	31.95
75	Azerbaijan	31.63
76	India	30.88
77	Bosnia and Herzegovina	29.98
78	Peru	29.57
79	Gabon	28.80
80	Guatemala	28.21
81	Malawi	27.95
82	Morocco	26.42
83	Jordan	26.15
84	Burkina Faso	24.77
85	Nepal	24.31
86	Namibia	23.40
87	Central African Republic	23.33
88	Mozambique	21.88
89	Ethiopia	20.82
90	Ghana	19.75
91	Malaysia	19.29
92	Liberia	17.79
93	Senegal	15.92
94	Zambia	15.66
95	Uganda	14.05
96	Kuwait	13.92
97	Tanzania	13.41
98	Lesotho	13.13
99	Guinea-Bissau	10.93
100	Zimbabwe	0.00

The Graphical Scoreboard

