

Measuring Governance:

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The third wave era since the early-1970s has been remarkable for the spread of democratic governance and human rights in many societies around the globe. The fall of the Berlin Wall Freedom House (2009) estimate that the number of liberal democracies doubled from the early-1970s until 2000. During the last decade, however, progress slowed to a sluggish and uncertain pace (Puddington 2009). It is premature and unduly pessimistic to claim that a 'reverse' wave or 'democratic recession' is occurring, as some observers believe (Diamond 2008). Yet multiple challenges continue to limit further progress in democratization. Fragile electoral democracies have been undermined by inconclusive or disputed election results, partisan strife and recurrent political scandals, and military coups (Kapstan and Converse 2008; Fish and Wittenberg 2009). These issues, always difficult, have been compounded in recent years by the aftermath of the global financial crisis, which generated worsening economic conditions, falling employment and wages, and the largest decline in world trade for eighty years. Even before this downturn, in the world's poorest societies, democratic governance faced particularly severe obstacles in delivering basic public services to their citizens. The U.N. (2008) reports enduring and deeply-entrenched poverty for the bottom billion in the least developed nations, raising doubts about whether the world can achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, as planned. In fragile or post-crisis societies, the struggle to reduce conflict, build sustainable peace, and strengthen the capacity and legitimacy of democratically-elected states cannot be underestimated (Doyle and Sambanis 2006). In this complex and difficult environment, it would be naïve to assume that the third wave era of democratization continues to advance steadily. It has become even more vital to understand the conditions which underpin regime change, as well as the underlying processes and policies leading towards the advance and consolidation of democratic governance.

An important issue arising from these developments concerns how we measure changes in the quality of democratic governance. Recent years have seen a burgeoning array of approaches and indicators designed for this purpose.¹ Quantitative indicators are particularly valuable to provide an initial check-up of democratic health, where a country is compared against cross-national standards. Is voter turnout in the US and UK particularly low – or relatively high? Is the proportion of women in elected office in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan a cause for celebration - or concern? In Ghana, Malawi, and Benin, is the quality of human rights, the transparency of government information, and the rule of law all relatively positive - or negative compared with other sub-Saharan African societies? Political indicators are now widely used to evaluate needs, to highlight problems, and to monitor the effectiveness of policy interventions.

The idea of political indicators is far from new; some of the earliest, which became widely adopted in the academic and policy research communities, were developed to measure the state of civil liberties and political rights by Freedom House in 1972, as well as the Polity I data collection by Ted Robert Gurr and Harry Eckstein focusing upon patterns of democratic and autocratic regime change. But this enterprise has rapidly expanded; during the last decade, literally dozens of indicators, of varying quality and coverage, have become widely available to gauge the quality of democracy in general, as well as multiple measures of ‘good governance’, human rights, corruption, women’s empowerment, civic engagement, social capital, and many other related issues.(UNDP 2007) During recent decades, the range of public opinion surveys monitoring these issues has also substantially grown in scope and reach (Norris 2008a). In the process, important gains in the level of conceptual sophistication, methodological transparency, scope, and geographic coverage of all these measures have occurred.

[Figure 1 about here]

These developments raise many important and complex questions. In particular, do indicators based on mass or elite evaluations of the quality of democratic governance coincide? If there is congruence, this increases our confidence in the reliability of both estimates. Where mass and elite assessments diverge, however, which source provides the most legitimate, valid, and reliable benchmark for scholars and practitioners? What are the reasons for any divergence, such as measurement error, and which source is preferable? Elite evaluations are commonly assumed to be ‘correct’ and where mass evaluations differ, the public is usually assumed to be mistaken, unaware, ill-informed, or simply misguided in their judgments. Yet for policymakers, in some circumstances, the legitimacy derived from professionally-conducted public opinion polls makes these preferable indicators of the health of democratic governance.

To consider these issues, Part I outlines the criteria of validity, reliability and legitimacy which are useful standards for evaluating indicators of democratic governance. A series of elite-level indicators are compared against equivalent measures in cross-national public opinion surveys. The elite-level indicators are chosen to represent some of the most widely-cited cross-national measures commonly used by scholars and policy analysts. They each have broad cross-national scope and a lengthy time-series, with data based on annual observations classifying regimes worldwide. (Munck 2009) These include the Kaufmann-Kraay measures of ‘good governance’, created by the World Bank Institute, and widely adopted in the development community. We also compare Freedom House’s index of liberal democracy and the Polity IV project’s assessment of constitutional democracy, the elite-level Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, and CIRI’s Human Rights Index. Public opinion is derived from equivalent items measured by representative surveys at mass level, as contained in the 4th and 5th waves of the World Values Survey.

Part II compares elite-level and public evaluations of the quality of democratic governance. The results demonstrate that these evaluations of democracy often diverge. Closer agreement between mass and elite evaluations can be found concerning certain indicators of ‘good governance’ and human rights, although judgments also differ on some other dimensions. Some of the difference between mass and elite can be attributed to measurement errors; the equivalent survey items may not prove equivalent to the elite-level indicators, and the elite indicators ranking countries also have large margins of error. But the extent of the mass-elite divergence across multiple indicators suggests that the contrasts cannot be dismissed as simply the product of measurement error.

The conclusion considers the implications of these findings and how the results should be interpreted. Where there is divergence between mass and elite, it is usually assumed that the elite indicators based on ‘expert’ judgments are usually more informed and accurate, and the public evaluations must therefore be mistaken, unaware, or ignorant. After all, accurate judgments about the quality of democracy or the state of corruption in a country often requires processing and evaluating complex technical information, and it may be that the public is simply unaware of the true situation. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) documented numerous examples where the American public lacks awareness about technical policy issues, as well as the limited knowledge that most citizens display about political events, institutions and people, even in long-established democracies and highly-educated post-industrial societies.

Instead of assuming that expert indicators always provide the ‘correct’ measurement, however, this study concludes, more agnostically, that no single best measure or indicator of democratic governance exists for all purposes; instead, as Collier and Adcock (1999) suggest, specific choices are best justified pragmatically by the theoretical framework and analytical goals used in

any study. The most prudent strategy is to compare the results of alternative indicators at both mass and elite levels, including those available from cross-national public opinion surveys, to see if the findings remain robust and consistent irrespective of the specific measures employed for analysis. If so, then this generates greater confidence in the reliability of the results, since the main generalizations hold irrespective of the particular measures which are used. If not, then we need to consider how far any differences in the results can be attributed to the underlying concepts and methodologies which differ among these measures. The available elite-level indicators are relatively blunt instruments for assessing the quality of democracy and for diagnosing specific problems of concern within any particular state. For policymakers, elite-level indicators also suffer from certain problems of legitimacy, which may limit their use politically. By contrast, public opinion surveys are likely to prove more politically legitimate, nuanced, and useful to diagnose, monitor, and strengthen the quality of democratic governance across and within many states worldwide.

Indicators monitoring the health of democratic governance

Given the existence of a growing range of indicators of the health of democratic governance, how can they be evaluated? Three criteria – validity, reliability and legitimacy - are particularly important considerations.

Valid empirical measures accurately reflect the analytical concepts to which they relate. The study of the origin and stability of democratic regimes requires attention to normative concepts in democratic theory, as well as to the construction of appropriate operational empirical indicators. Other indicators which are often used, such as those concerning corruption, human rights, rule of law, and government effectiveness, also involve complex theoretical concepts.

Invalid empirical measures may miss the mark by producing unconvincing inferences, for example if the operational indicators fail to capture important aspects of the underlying concept.

Reliable empirical measures prove consistent across time and place, using data sources which can be easily replicated to allow scholars to build a cumulative body of research. Scientific research makes its procedures public and transparent, including the steps involved in selecting cases, gathering data and performing analysis. For Karl Popper (1963), the classic hall-mark of the scientific inquiry is the process which subjects bold conjectures to rigorous testing, allowing strong claims to be refuted, if not supported by the evidence. While repeated confirmations cannot prove inductive probabilities, attempts to refute findings can advance the body of scientific knowledge. Scientific progress arises from successive attempts to prove ourselves wrong. This process requires reliable empirical measures which are easily open to replication in cumulative studies conducted by the scientific community.

In addition to these common scientific standards, for practitioners and policymakers the *legitimacy* of measures is also important, especially concerning sensitive issues such as the quality of democratic governance, human rights, and corruption. The use of indicators by the international development community raises concern about who decides upon the rankings, whether the results are ideologically biased, and how they are constructed. Legitimacy is strengthened by transparency in the construction and measurement of indices and benchmarks, ownership of the process by national stake-holders, and the inclusion of a wide diversity of viewpoints in any evaluative process. Conversely measures may be regarded by the development community and by local officials as less trustworthy and legitimate if the process by which they are generated is closed and opaque, if evaluations are conducted by outside experts (especially if

limited to those based in the global North), and if only a few experts drawn from one sector make the assessments.

How far do the available empirical indicators meet the criteria of validity, reliability and legitimacy? The range of diagnostic tools currently available to assess the health of democratic governance in any country is arrayed as ideal types in the analytical classification illustrated in Figure 1. This typology distinguishes between *public* assessments, based on either in-depth deliberative audits or more representative public opinion polls, and *elite* evaluations, based on either ‘expert’ surveys or composite indices (combining a range of different expert surveys with elite judgments and/or using official statistics).

[Figure 1 about here]

Public assessments include the democratic audit approach, pioneered by International IDEA (Beetham et al 2002) and David Beetham (1999, 2004), which represents the most in-depth qualitative method. Through this approach, multiple stake-holders and groups within each country deliberate about the state of the state, as exemplified by the Canadian, Swedish, and Australian versions. The audit approach has generated important debates in many countries and contributed towards major political and constitutional reforms, as in the UK. Audits have now been used in more than eighteen states worldwide, including newer democracies exemplified by Mongolia. The audit approach is not appropriate for every context, however, as it requires certain conditions for deliberation to operate, including freedom of expression and tolerance of dissent, a rich civil society with inclusive voices from multiple stakeholders, and the necessary resources to engage in this process.

Public assessments of the state of democracy include the growing array of national and cross-national public opinion surveys which have been burgeoning in many societies (Norris 2008a),

illustrated in Table 1. Major cross-national and time-series surveys of public opinion include the Euro-barometer and related EU surveys (which started in 1970), the European Election Study (1979), the European Values Survey and the World Values Survey (1981), the International Social Survey Programme (1985), the Global Barometers (1990 and various), the Comparative National Elections Project (1990), the European Voter and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (1995), the European Social Survey (2002), the Transatlantic Trends survey (2002), the Pew Global Attitudes project (2002), and the Gallup World Poll (2005). These allow a representative sample of the general public to express their views about the quality of democracy in their own country, as well as to assess the performance of their government leaders, institutions, and policies, confidence in government institutions and satisfaction with democracy, patterns of participation and civic engagement, and changes in social and political values.

[Table 1 about here]

Among the elite indices, some composite measures have drawn heavily upon expert surveys, sometimes in combination with official national statistics and surveys of public opinion. Composite measures are exemplified by the World Bank Institute's six indicators of good governance, developed by Daniel Kaufmann and his colleagues (2003, 2007). Others have relied solely upon aggregate national data, exemplified by the Inter-Parliamentary union's database on the proportion of women in national parliaments, used to evaluate gender equality in elected office; International IDEA's dataset on electoral turnout worldwide since 1945, to document trends in voter participation; and CIRI's human rights index, monitoring national ratification and implementation of major international conventions and treaties.² Where reliable official statistics are collected and standardized, these indices facilitate global comparisons across states and over time.³

[Table 2 about here]

There are now numerous approaches to measure democracy; one review noted almost four-dozen separate indicators of democratic performance, differing in their geographic and temporal scope (Foweraker and Krznaric 2000, Munck and Verkulian 2002). Which of these should be compared? We can set aside the indicators which are restricted in the number of states they cover, the frequency of the measures, or the years to which they apply. Publicly-available indicators which are widely used in the comparative literature reflect the prevailing consensus among researchers. Using these criteria produces a selected list of five standard elite indicators of democratic governance, each reflecting differing conceptions of the essential features. Table 2 summarizes the key dimensions of each.

(i) Freedom House: Liberal Democracy

One of the best known measures of liberal democracy, and one of the most widely used in the comparative literature, is the Gastil index of civil liberties and political rights produced annually by Freedom House. The measure has been widely employed by practitioners, for example its results are incorporated into the benchmark data employed by the US Millennium Challenge Account to assess the quality of governance and award aid in poorer societies. It has also been employed by many comparative scholars (Diamond 1996; Barro 1999; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Freedom House, an independent think tank based in the United States, first began to assess political trends in the 1950s with the results published as the Balance Sheet of Freedom. In 1972, Freedom House launched a new, more comprehensive annual study called *Freedom in the World*. Raymond Gastil developed the survey's methodology, which assigned ratings of their political rights and civil liberties for each independent nation state (as well as for dependent territories) and then categorized them as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. The survey continued to

be produced by Gastil until 1989, when a larger team of in-house survey analysts was established. Subsequent editions of the survey have followed essentially the same format although more details have recently been released about the coding framework used for each assessment.

The index monitors the existence of political rights in terms of electoral processes, political pluralism, and the functioning of government. Civil liberties are defined by the existence of freedom of speech and association, rule of law, and personal rights. The research team draws upon multiple sources of information to develop their classifications based on a checklist of questions, including ten separate items monitoring the existence of political rights and fifteen on civil liberties. These items assess the presence of institutional checks and balances constraining the executive through the existence of a representative and inclusive legislature, an independent judiciary implementing the rule of law, and the existence of political rights and civil liberties, including to reasonable self-determination and participation by minorities, and the presence of free and fair election laws. Each item is allocated a score from 0 to 4 and each is given equal weight when aggregated. The raw scores for each country are then converted into a seven-point scale of political rights and a seven-point scale for civil liberties, and in turn these are collapsed to categorize each regime worldwide as either 'free', 'partly free', or 'not free'. As a result of this process, Freedom House (2009) estimate that out of 193 nation states, roughly two thirds or 119 (62%) could be classified as electoral democracies. The emphasis of this measure on a wide range of civil liberties, rights, and freedoms means that this most closely reflects notions of liberal democracy. The index has the advantage of providing comprehensive coverage of nation-states and independent territories worldwide, as well as establishing a long time-series of observations conducted annually since 1972. The measure is also comprehensive in its

conceptualization and it is particularly appropriate for those seeking an indicator of liberal democracy.

Despite these virtues, the index has been subject to considerable criticism on a number of methodological grounds (Munck and Verkulian 2002). The procedures used by the team of researchers employed by Freedom House lack transparency, so that scholars cannot double-check the reliability and consistency of the coding decisions, or replicate the results. The questions used for constructing the index often involve two or three separate items within each sub-category, allowing ambiguous measurement and aggregation across these items. The process of compositing the separate items is not subject to systematic factor analysis, so it remains unclear whether the items do indeed cluster together into consistent scales of political rights and civil liberties. Moreover since the index contains such a broad range of indicators, this also makes it less valuable as an analytical tool useful for policymakers (Mesquite et al 2005).

(ii) Polity IV: Constitutional Democracy

Another approach commonly used in the comparative and international relations literature is the classification of constitutional democracy provided by the Polity project. This was initiated by Ted Robert Gurr (1974) and it has evolved over the past three decades. The latest version, Polity IV, provides annual time series data in country-year format covering 161 countries from 1800 to date.⁴ Coders working on the Polity IV project classify democracy and autocracy in each nation-year as a composite score of different characteristics relating to authority structures. Democracy is conceived of conceptually as reflecting three essential elements: the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express preferences about alternative policies and leaders; the existence of institutionalized constraints on the power of the executive; and the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens (although not actually measured). The classification

emphasizes the existence or absence of institutional features of the nation state. By contrast, autocracies are seen as regimes which restrict or suppress competitive political participation, in which the chief executive is chosen from within the political elite, and, once in office, leaders face few institutional constraints on their power. The dataset constructs a ten-point democracy scale by coding the competitiveness of political participation (1-3), the competitiveness of executive recruitment (1-2), the openness of executive recruitment (1), and the constraints on the chief executive (1-4). Autocracy is measured by negative versions of the same indices. The two scales are combined into a single democracy-autocracy score varying from -10 to +10. Polity has also been used to monitor and identify processes of major regime change and democratic transitions, classified as a positive change in the democracy-autocracy score of more than 3 points.

The Polity IV scores provide an exceptionally long series of observations stretching over two centuries, as well as covering most nation-states worldwide. The provision of separate indices for each of the main dimensions allows scholars to disaggregate the components. The emphasis on constitutional rules restricting the executive may be particularly valuable for distinguishing the initial downfall of autocratic regimes and the transition to multiparty elections. Unfortunately the democracy-autocracy score also suffers from certain important limitations. Polity IV emphasizes the existence of constraints upon the chief executive as a central part of their measure. Yet this does not distinguish restrictions on the executive arising from democratic checks and balances compared from those due to other actors, such as the power of the military or economic elites. Although more information is now released in the user's codebook, the processes which the Polity team uses to classify regimes continue to lack a degree of transparency. Moreover, although acknowledging the importance of civil liberties as part of their overall

conceptualization of democracy, Polity IV does not actually attempt to code or measure this dimension.

(iii) Good Governance

The last decade has also seen a proliferation of alternative indicators which have sought to operationalize the related but distinct notion of ‘good governance’ and its components. The World Bank has used assessments of government performance when allocating resources since the mid-1970s. Focusing at first on macroeconomic management, the assessment criteria have expanded to include trade and financial policies, business regulation, social sector policies, the effectiveness of the public sector, and transparency, accountability, and corruption. These criteria are assessed annually for all World Bank borrowers. Among these, the issue of corruption has moved towards the center of the World Bank’s governance strategy, as this is regarded as a fundamental impediment towards reducing poverty. Many of the available indicators of good governance, political risk, and corruption are based on perceptual assessments, using expert surveys and subjective judgments. These may prove unreliable for several reasons, including reliance upon a small number of national ‘experts’, the use of business leaders and academic scholars as the basis of the judgments, variations in country coverage by different indices, and possible bias towards more favorable evaluations of countries with good economic outcomes. Nevertheless in the absence of other reliable indicators covering a wide range of nation states, such as representative surveys of public opinion, these measures provide some of the best available gauges of good governance.

The most ambitious attempt to measure all the dimensions of ‘good governance’ concern the indices generated by Kaufmann-Kraay and colleagues for the World Bank Institute. The Kaufmann-Kraay indicators (also known as ‘The Worldwide Governance Indicators’) are some

of the most widely-used measures of good governance. Compiled since 1996, these composite indices measure the perceived quality of six dimensions of governance for 213 countries, based on 31 data sources produced by 25 organizations. The underlying data are based on hundreds of variables and reflect the perceptions and views of many types of ‘experts’ as well as mass survey respondents on various dimensions of governance. The World Bank does not generate these separate assessments; rather it integrates them into composite indices. The measures specify the margins of error associated with each estimate, allowing users to identify a range of statistically likely ratings for each country.

The Worldwide Governance Indicators measure the quality of six dimensions of governance: *Voice and accountability*: 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 free media. *Political stability and absence of violence*: perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including political violence and terrorism. *Government effectiveness*: the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. *Regulatory quality*: the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. *Rule of law*: the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. *Control of corruption*: 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. One problem, unfortunately, is that the core concept of ‘good

governance’ contains a number of distinct dimensions, it is often over-loaded and conflated with multiple meanings and measures, and it remains under-theorized compared with the work on democratic governance. (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2005) As Grindle (2004, 2007) has argued, the ‘good governance’ agenda is poorly-focused, over-long and growing ever longer, depending upon the emphasis given to nostrums for reform.

(iv) Corruption

Related well-known attempts to monitor several aspects of ‘good governance’ include the Corruption Perception Index, generated annually since 1995 by Transparency International. This is based on expert assessments. The CPI is a composite index, making use of surveys of business people and assessments by country analysts. Fourteen sources are used in the construction of the CPI, for example from the Economist intelligence Unit, the Asian Development Bank and the World Economic Forum. All sources generally apply a definition of corruption such as the misuse of public power for private benefit, for example bribing of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, or embezzlement of public funds, but the exact definition and measures vary among sources. The CPI is to be credited with collecting, integrating and disseminating data on this sensitive topic, which is particularly difficult to gauge through official statistics and related sources. The dataset has been widely used, generating a burgeoning literature on the causes and consequences of corruption.

(v) Human Rights

Lastly, the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Database monitors a range of Human Rights, such as civil liberties, women’s rights, and state repression.⁵ The dataset contains standards-based quantitative information for a wide range of internationally-recognized human rights, covering 191 countries from all regions of the world. The data set contains measures of government

human rights practices, not human rights policies or overall human rights conditions (which may be affected by non-state actors). It codes physical integrity rights--the rights not to be tortured, summarily executed, disappeared, or imprisoned for political beliefs, as well as civil liberties such as free speech, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of religion, and the right to participate in the selection of government leaders, workers rights and women's rights.

Comparing public opinion and elite indicators

How do we evaluate each of these approaches to monitoring the quality of democratic governance? There is debate about the most appropriate criteria used to measure the core concepts, the weighting which should be given to separate components, the reliability of the coding procedures used by different researchers, and the way that these indicators should be translated into regime typologies. Elite indices come under particularly strong challenge from states which regularly rank close to the bottom on these measures. One approach to evaluation is to see whether the elite indicators are related to similar but independently-generated measures. In practice, despite all the differences in the construction of these indices, it is striking that the two alternative elite measures of democracy correlate strongly with each other (Collier and Adcock 1999; Elkins 2000). For comparison, the Polity IV scale of democracy-autocracy was recoded to a positive 20-point scale, and the Freedom House index was recoded so that a score of 1 represented the least democratic regimes, while a score of 7 represented the most democratic. The Freedom House rating of Liberal Democracy was strongly and significantly related to the Polity IV score ($R=.904^{**}$). An examination of the trends since 1972 (Norris 2008b) documented by each of these indicators also shows considerable agreement among the series,

and among other indices of democracy, despite differences in their conceptualization, measurement and time-periods.

This suggests that there is an underlying elite-level consensus about historical developments in democracy, generating confidence about the reliability and robustness of measures. Yet it remains possible that systematic bias may affect all these measures, where similar data sources and reference works are used to construct these scales, or if subjective evaluations of each country by experts are influenced by the results published by other elite indices. It is important to see how far these elite indicators coincide with the public's perception of the quality of governance in each society. If there is a strong correlation, this increases confidence in the estimates, and suggests that the elite measures which have been constructed reflect the underlying views of citizens in each state. This would greatly strengthen their legitimacy and undermine the charge that the indices reflect 'Western' values rather than universal standards. If, on the other hand, there are sharp discrepancies between public views of the health of democratic governance and the elite indicators, then this suggests a more complex picture which requires careful elaboration and interpretation.

Evidence of attitudes and values from public opinion in many different societies is available from many cross-national surveys of public opinion. Here the study draws upon the 5th wave of the World Values Survey (WVS-5), which covers a wide range of countries from all major cultural regions, as well as democratic and autocratic regimes. The World Values Survey is a global investigation of socio-cultural and political change. This project has carried out representative national surveys of the basic values and beliefs of the publics in more than 90 independent countries, containing over 88% of the world's population and covering all six inhabited continents. It builds on the European Values Survey, first carried out in 22 countries

in 1981. A second wave of surveys, in 41 countries, was completed in 1990-1991. The third wave was carried out in 55 nations in 1995-1996. The fourth wave, with 59 nation-states, took place in 1999-2001. The fifth wave was completed in 2005-7.⁶

The WVS survey includes some of the most affluent market economies in the world, such as the U.S., Japan and Switzerland, with per capita annual incomes as high as \$40,000; together with middle-level industrializing countries including Taiwan, Brazil, and Turkey, as well as poorer agrarian societies, exemplified by Uganda, Nigeria, and Viet Nam, with per capita annual incomes of \$300 or less. Some smaller nations have populations below one million, such as Malta, Luxembourg and Iceland, while at the other extreme almost one billion people live in India and over one billion live in China. The survey contains older democracies such as Australia, India and the Netherlands, newer democracies including El Salvador, Estonia and Taiwan, and autocracies such as China, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, and Egypt. The transition process also varies markedly: some nations have experienced a rapid consolidation of democracy during the 1990s. The survey also includes some of the first systematic data on public opinion in many Muslim states, including Arab countries such as Jordan, Iran, Egypt, and Morocco, as well as in Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The most comprehensive coverage comes from Western Europe, North America and Scandinavia, where public opinion surveys have the longest tradition, but countries are included from all world regions, including Sub Saharan Africa. This study draws primarily on the 4th and 5th wave of the survey, reflecting the contemporary state of democratic governance.

Mass and elite evaluations of democracy

We can start by comparing the relationship between public evaluations of the state of democracy in their own country with the Freedom House and Polity IV elite indicators of democracy. The

public was asked to evaluate the state of democracy in their own country on a 10-point scale, based on the following question in the 2005-7 WVS: *“How democratically is this country being governed today? Again, using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is ‘not at all democratic’ and 10 means that it is ‘completely democratic’, what position would you choose?”*

[Table 3 and Figure 2 about here]

The comparison of public and elite evaluations in 2005, presented in Table 3, shows no significant relationship across the 37-41 nations under comparison. To double check the results, the study also compared the Freedom House and the Polity IV elite measures of democracy with public satisfaction with the performance of democracy in the 1999-2000 WVS, using an alternative four-point scale, but this test also failed to detect any significant correlations. Figure 2 explores the pattern in greater detail for the Freedom House data by showing the clusters of countries on both mass and elite indicators. In the top-right quadrant, there is considerable agreement between the public and the Freedom House evaluation, where citizens in countries as varied as Sweden, Mali, Ghana and Canada gave high marks to the state of democracy in their own country, as did Freedom House. In a couple of countries, notably Ethiopia and Russia, the negative judgments of Freedom House and the public also coincided. But there were many nations located in the top-left quadrant, where Freedom House gave the country a positive rating for liberal democracy, but where citizens were more critical, including in many of the post-Communist nations such as Poland, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine. In these nations, the institutions of multi-party elections have become established over successive contests and yet the public does not express a relatively high evaluation of the state of democracy. And there are also some important outliers in the bottom-right quadrant, where citizens in both China and Vietnam expressed very positive evaluations of the state of democracy, while Freedom House

proved far more critical of the civil liberties and political rights under these regimes. We need to consider and interpret the reasons for these outliers and this issue will be discussed in the final section.

Good governance and corruption

How do the Kaufmann-Kraay indices relate to public opinion? Table 4 compares the simple correlation between the public's evaluation of the state of democracy in their own country in the 2005-7 wave of the WVS against the six Kaufmann-Kraay measures plus a summary good governance index created by adding these separate items into one composite measure.

[Table 4 about here]

Here some significant relationships are evident, in particular public evaluations of democracy were positively correlated with the Kaufmann-Kraay indicators of political stability, rule of law, government effectiveness, and corruption, although the correlation of public opinion with measures of government regulatory quality and voice and accountability were not significant at the conventional cut-off level ($P > .05$). It requires further investigation, however, to establish more precisely whether these correlations are actually related to each other, or merely spurious. For example, more affluent countries could plausibly have both better governance and also greater public satisfaction with the state of democracy. One way to make a more precise comparison is to contrast the public's attitudes towards corruption in their own society against the Transparency International (TI) elite perceptions of the level of corruption within each country. There are two items in the World Values Survey, relating to ethical standards, concerning whether it was ever thought justifiable to cheat on taxes and on whether it was ever thought justifiable to take a bribe, both of which allow us to explore this issue.

[Figures 4 and 5 about here]

Figures 4 and 5 present the results of the comparisons. A weak but insignificant relationship was found between the public's view of the justifiability of taking a bribe and cheating on taxes and the TI Corruption Perception Index by elites. The scatter-plot reveals two clusters of countries. In one cluster, exemplified by Finland, New Zealand, the UK and Australia, ethical standards are high according to both indicators. The public believes that it is never or rarely justifiable to take a bribe or to cheat on taxes, and TI's CPI index classifies these countries as relatively clean. But among the countries which the CPI expert index ranks as higher in corruption, the general public displays a wide diversity of moral views. In some of these societies the public reports that it is never or rarely thought appropriate to take a bribe or to cheat on taxes, such as Argentina, China, Vietnam and Indonesia, ranging across the spectrum to cultures which are more tolerant towards these acts, such as Zambia, Mal and Mexico. Therefore while mass and elite judgments coincide among the 'cleanest' states, there is only a weak mass and elite correspondence in perceptions in societies regarded by elites as problematic for corruption.

[Table 5 and Figure 6 about here]

Lastly, what of human rights: is there a stronger linkage between the elite indices provided by CIRI and the public's evaluation of the state of human rights in their own country? Table 5 presents the comparison. The results reveal a significant level of agreement between the elite and the public's views of the most extreme and dramatic cases of human rights abuses, involving disappearances and extra-judicial killings (see Figure 6). Countries such as Germany, Finland and Canada were seen as highly respectful of human rights, according to both the public and the elite evaluations, while by contrast some states, notably Iraq, were ranked low by both. There is also a significant link between mass and elite perceptions of the state of human rights in their

country and of women's economic, political and social rights. By contrast, the other elite evaluations, especially those reflecting basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech and association, were not significantly correlated with the public's evaluation of their own country's respect for human rights.

Conclusions and implications

The comparison presented in this chapter presents somewhat complex results. Firstly, on evaluations of the state of democracy, it is apparent that there is no significant relationship between the mass and elite assessments. This is particularly evident in the one-party Communist states of China and Vietnam, but this is also true in many post-Communist societies with freedom of expression, where many citizens proved highly critical of the state of their democracy, compared with the evaluations given by the Freedom House and Polity IV. Secondly, the indicators of good governance showed greater congruence between public and elite evaluations. The more rigorous test, however, came from the comparisons about perceptions of corruption, where there was some agreement between the public and elite judgments in the top ranked states, but no consensus among the countries ranked low by TI's CPI. Lastly, on human rights, public and elite evaluations were in agreement on the worst types of abuses of physical integrity, and the state of women's rights, but no agreement between the public and elite evaluations of civil liberties.

Where there is divergence between mass and elite, it is often assumed that the elite indicators based on 'expert' judgments are usually 'correct' or 'accurate'. This assumption implies that public evaluations expressed through representative surveys must therefore be mistaken, unaware, or simply ignorant. There are many reasons why public perceptions may be mistaken; accurate judgments about the quality of democracy or the state of corruption in a country

requires the capacity to process and evaluate complex technical information, and the public may simply be unaware of the ‘true’ situation. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) documented numerous examples of public ignorance concerning factual judgments about complex policy issues, such as estimates about levels of government spending, changes in crime rates, or the risks arising from climate change, although the United States has well-educated publics, widespread access to information, and open political debate in the free press. Moreover in autocracies with the most restrictive regimes, information is commonly manipulated, restricted and censored. In states where freedom of speech is limited, survey respondents may be unwilling or unable to express their true feelings about politically-sensitive issues, such as the state of human rights or levels of democracy. Fear of intimidation by government authorities could deter respondents from answering social surveys honestly or openly. Moreover enduring cultural attitudes towards the state of democratic governance could lag behind the regime transitions which occurred during the third wave of democracy. Elite perceptions may also be based on similar standards, but the judgments of international elites, such as experts in regional NGOs, foreign journalists and comparative scholars, could provide a more accurate cross-national perspective. For all these reasons, it is often assumed that elite judgments provide more accurate estimates.

Yet we can conclude, more agnostically, that no single best measure or indicator of democratic governance exists for all purposes. In particular, due to a ‘ceiling’ effect, many of the elite indicators are often limited in their capacity to distinguish among contemporary states which score relatively well according to the data. Elite indices often suffer from a substantial margin of error. They are also commonly insufficiently nuanced and precise to provide rich insights into underlying problems *within* each country, still less to provide reliable guidance to what programs and policies work most effectively in any particular case. In this regard, it may be more helpful

to turn to alternative approaches, including the burgeoning range of contemporary social survey resources which are now covering more and more parts of the globe. Allowing the public to express its own views about how their democracy works – or fails to work – is important as an avenue of expression and participation, as a way to guide policy priorities, as well as being one of the many ways in which polls can serve the public good.

Table 1: Key features of the cross-national series of public opinion surveys

Series	Series started (i)	Frequency	Total nations (latest survey) (ii)	Data downloadable (iii)	Coordinating Organization	Online resources Http://
Euro- barometer and related studies	1970	Bi-annual	27	Public archives	Directorate General Press & Comms, European Commission	Organizing & reports: http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/ Data and continuity guides from ZUMA, Cologne Archive: www.gesis.org/en/data_service/eurobarometer
European Values/ World Values Study- Study	1981- 1983	Approx. 5 years	92	Public archives	Ronald INGLEHART, Institute of Social Research, University of	Organizing and data; www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

					Michigan	
International Social Survey Program (ISSP)	1985	Annual	38	Public archives	Secretariat: Bjørn HENRICHSEN, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), Bergen	Organizing: www.issp.org/ Data and continuity guide from the ZUMA Cologne Archive: www.gesis.org/en/data_service/issp/
Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)	1996- 2001	Module every 5 years	31	Public archives	Secretariat: David HOWELL, ISR, University of Michigan. Chair: Ian McAllister, ANU	Organizing and data: http://www.cses.org
Comparative National	1990	Irregular	19	Public archives	Richard GUNTHER,	Organizing and data: http://www.cnep.ics.ul.pt/

Election Study					Ohio State University	
Global-barometers, including:						http://www.globalbarometer.net/
New Europe Barometers	1991	Irregular	16		Richard ROSE, CSPP, Aberdeen University	www.cspp.strath.ac.uk
Afrobarometer	1999	Annual	18	Public archives	Michael BRATTON (Michigan State), Robert MATTES (IDASA, SA) and Dr E. GYIMAH-BOADI (CDD	www.afrobarometer.org

					Ghana)	
Latino- barometer	1995	Annual	18	Tables only	Marta LAGOS, MORI, Santiago	www.latinobarometro.org
Asian barometer	2001	Annual	17		Yun-han Chu, Taiwan	www.eastasiabarometer.org http://www.asianbarometer.org/
Arab Barometer	2005	Annual	5		Mark Tessler, University of Michigan	http://arabbarometer.org/
The European Social Survey (ESS)	2002	Biennial	21	Public archives	Roger JOWELL, Center for Comparative Social Surveys, City University	Organizing: http://naticent02.uuhost.uk.uu.net Data from the Norwegian archive: http://ess.nsd.uib.no .
Transatlantic Trends	2002	Annual	13	Public archives	German Marshall Fund of the United States and	http://www.transatlantictrends.org

					the Compagnia di San Paolo	
The Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002	Irregular	54	Via website	Andrew KOHUT, Director, The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press	http://pewglobal.org/
Gallup International <i>Voice of the People</i>	2002	Annual	60	Only tables released	Meril JAMES, Secretary General Gallup International	www.voice-of-the-people.net/

Notes: (i) In some cases there were often pilot studies and forerunners, such as the European Community Study, but this date is the recognizable start of the series in its present form. (ii) The number of countries included in each survey often varies by year. (iii) If not

deposited in public archives or directly downloadable, access to some data may be available from the surveys organizers on request, but there might also be charges for access.

Table 2: Selected elite indicators and measures of democratic governance

	Liberal democracy (i)	Constitutional democracy (ii)	Good Governance (iii)	Corruption Perception Index (iv)	Human Rights (v)
Source	Freedom House	Polity IV	Kaufmann-Kraay	Transparency International	Cingranelli- Richards
Core attributes	Political rights and civil liberties	Democracy and autocracy	Six dimensions of 'good' governance	Perceptions of corruption	Measures practices in 13 types of human rights
Measurement of attributes	Continuous 7-point scales for each	Continuous 20- point scale	Each is presented as continuous scales	Continuous global ranking	Continuous scales
Annual Observations	1972 to date	1800 to 1999	1996 to date	1995 to date	1981-2006

Main Strengths	Comprehensive scope	Extended time-period	Comprehensive global coverage	Comprehensive	Replicability, allows disaggregation
Main Weaknesses	Problems of conflation and measurement	Exclusion of mass participation; Aggregation problems	Composite indicators poorly related to concepts; large margins of error	Aggregates 14 sources using different concepts and measures	Data is derived mainly from US State Department reports

Sources: Freedom House. 2007. *Freedom in the World 2007*. Washington, DC: Freedom House. www.freedomhouse.org; Monty Marshall and Keith Jagers. 2003. *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2003*. <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/>; Tatu Vanhanen. 2000. 'A new dataset for measuring democracy, 1810-1998.' *Journal of Peace Research* 37(2): 251-265; Jose Cheibub and Jennifer Gandhi. 2004. 'A six-fold measure of democracies and dictatorships.' Unpublished paper presented at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Table 3: Correlation between public and elite evaluations of democracy

Elite evaluations	Public evaluations of state of democracy, 2005-7			Public satisfaction with democracy, 1999-2000		
	R.	Sig.	N	R.	Sig.	N
Liberal Democracy 2006 (FH)	.240	.130	41			
Constitutional Democracy 2006 (Polity IV)	.093	.585	37			
Liberal Democracy 2000 (FH)				.064	.646	54
Constitutional Democracy 2000 (Polity IV)				.000	.998	51

Note: Public evaluations of democracy in 2005-7 are the mean national scores derived from the 5th wave of the World Values Survey (Q163): “*How democratically is this country being governed today? Again, using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is ‘not at all democratic’ and 10 means that it is ‘completely democratic’, what position would you choose?*”

Public evaluations of democracy in 1999-2000 are the mean national scores derived from the 4th wave of the World Values Survey (Q168): “*On the whole are you very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country?*”

The table presents the simple correlation coefficient (R), its significance and the number of nations under comparison.

Sources: FH - Freedom House. 2007. *Freedom in the World 2007*. Washington, DC: Freedom House. www.freedomhouse.org; Polity IV - Monty Marshall and Keith Jaggers. 2006. *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2006*. <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/>.

Table 4: Correlation between public evaluations of democracy and the Kaufmann-Kraay indicators of ‘good governance’

	Correlation with public evaluations of democracy	Sig. (2- tailed)	N. of countries
Political stability	.442 **	.004	40
Rule of Law	.398 *	.011	40
Government effectiveness	.388 *	.013	40
Corruption	.377 *	.017	40
Voice and accountability	.281	.087	40
Government regulatory quality	.279	.081	40
Summary good governance index	.383 *	.015	40

Notes: Public evaluations of democracy are the mean national scores derived from the World Values Survey 2005-7 (Q163): “*How democratically is this country being governed today? Again, using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is ‘not at all democratic’ and 10 means that it is ‘completely democratic’, what position would you choose?*” The Kaufmann-Kraay good governance indicators, 2006, are from the World Bank Institute.

Sources: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi. 2007. *Governance Matters VI: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996-2006*. Washington DC: The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper. www.worldbank.org

Table 5: Correlation between mass and elite (CIRI) evaluations of human rights

	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N. of countries
Physical Integrity Index	.433	*	.012	33
Disappearances	.545	**	.001	33
Extrajudicial killings	.353	*	.044	33
Political imprisonment	.306		.084	33
Torture	.219		.222	33
Empowerment Index	.264		.144	32
Freedom of Association	.111		.537	33
Freedom of Movement	.305		.084	33
Freedom of Speech	.154		.392	33
Political Participation	.264		.138	33
Freedom of religion	.129		.473	33
Worker's rights	.259		.146	33
Women's economic rights	.423	*	.017	33
Women's political rights	.451	**	.008	33
Women's social rights	.361	*	.043	32

Note: Public evaluations of human rights in each country in 2005-7 are the mean national scores derived from the 5th wave of the World Values Survey (Q164): *“How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in this country? Do you feel there is...A great deal of respect for individual human rights (4), Fairly much respect (3), Not much respect (2), or No respect at all (1)?”*

Sources: David L. Cingranelli and David L. Richards 2004. The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Database Coder Manual. <http://ciri.binghamton.edu/>; World Values Survey 2005-7.

Figure 1: Diagnostic tools for assessing the quality of democratic governance

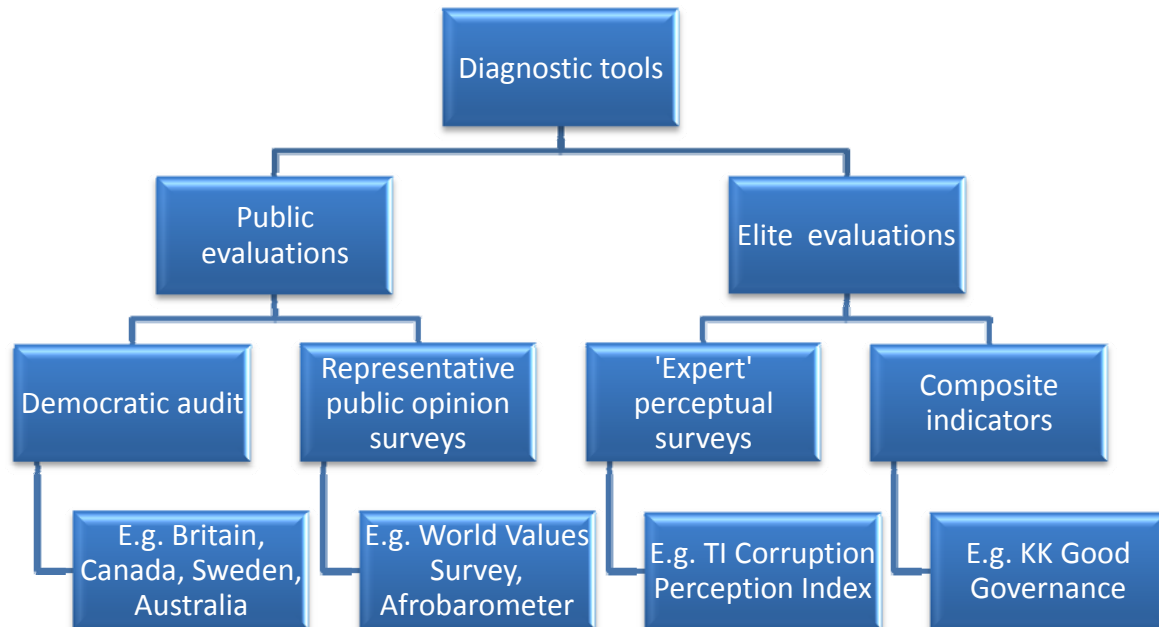
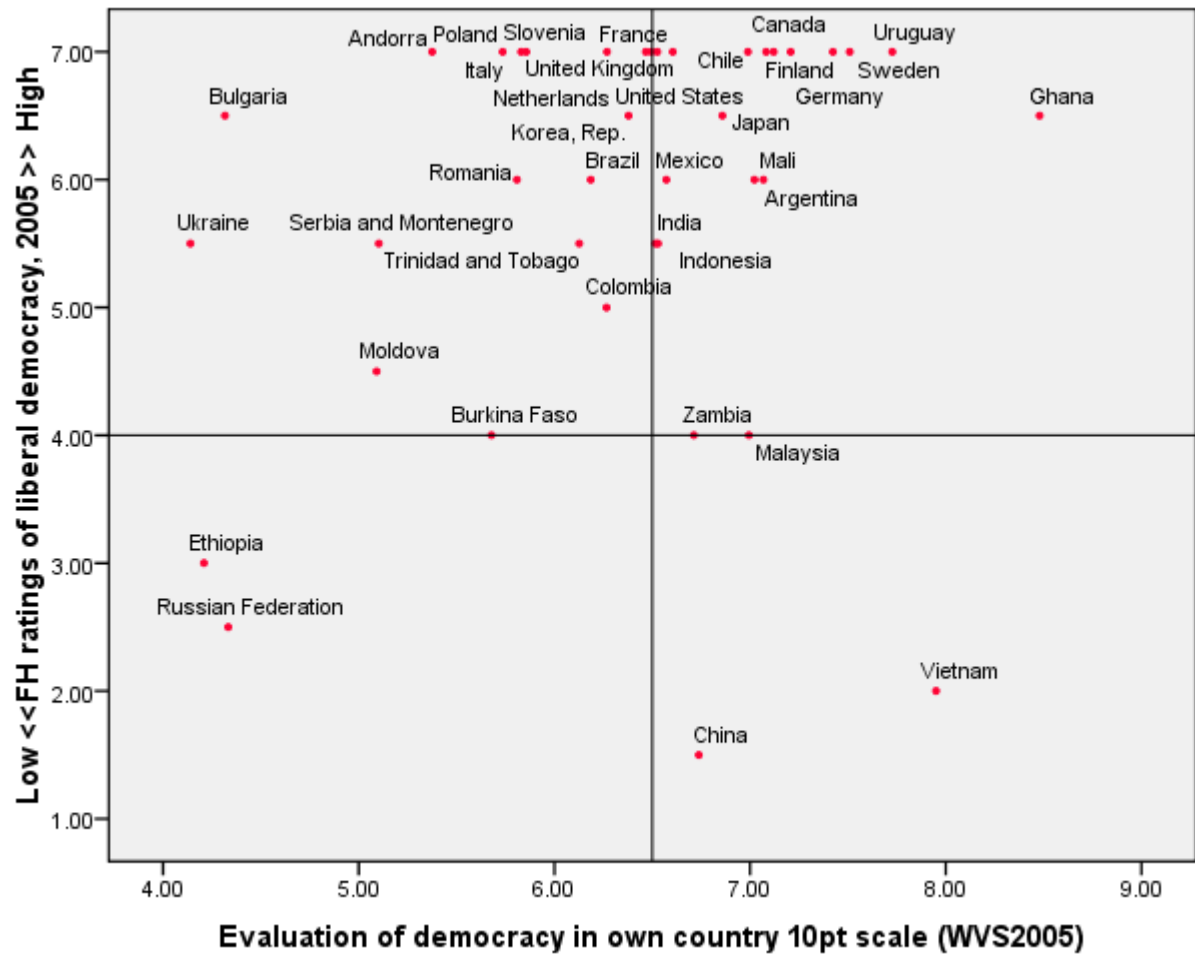


Figure 2: Comparison of mass and elite evaluations of democracy

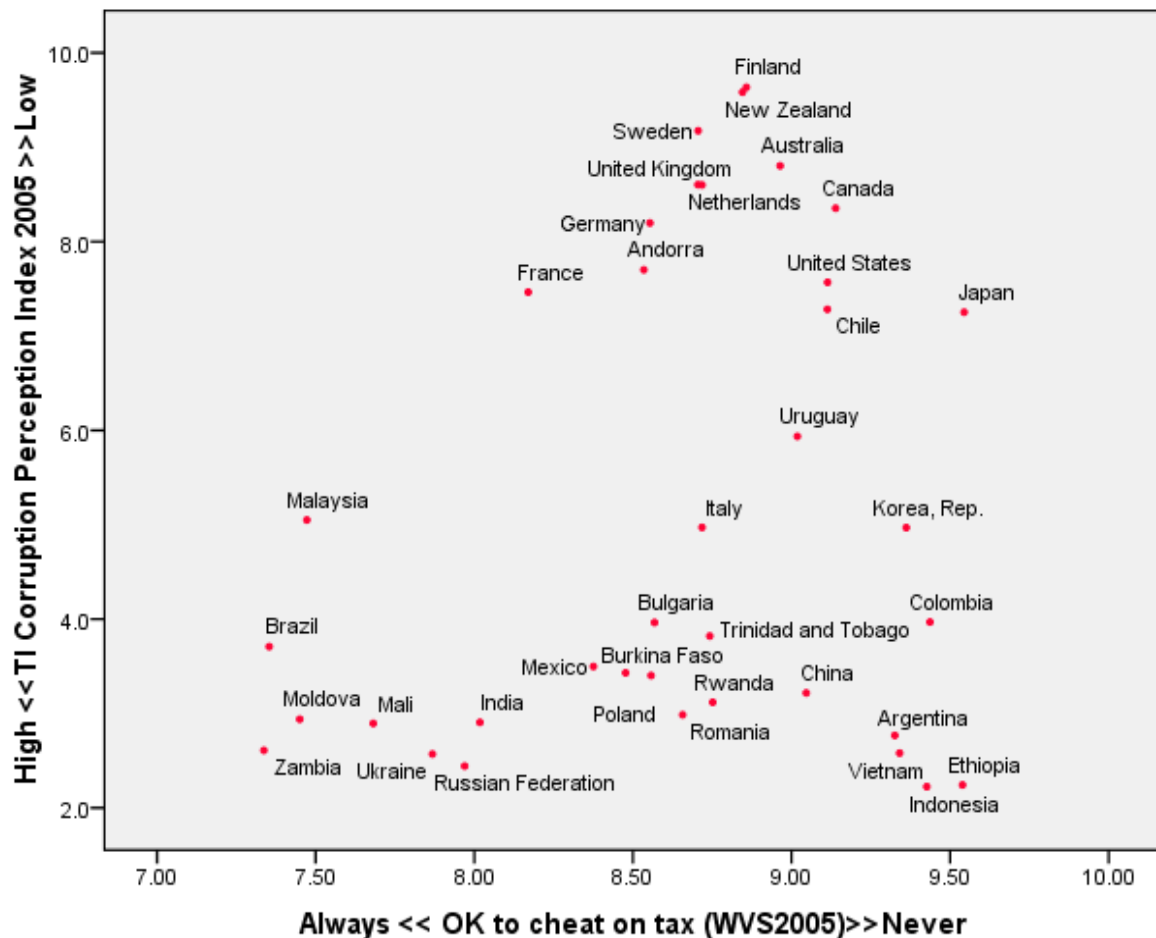


Notes: Freedom House rating of liberal democracy, 2005 (7-point scale of civil liberties and political rights with the score reversed, so that more democratic = high).

World Values Survey 2005-7 Q163: *“How democratically is this country being governed today? Again, using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is ‘not at all democratic’ and 10 means that it is ‘completely democratic’, what position would you choose?”*

Sources: Freedom House www.freedomhouse.org; World Values Survey 2005-7.

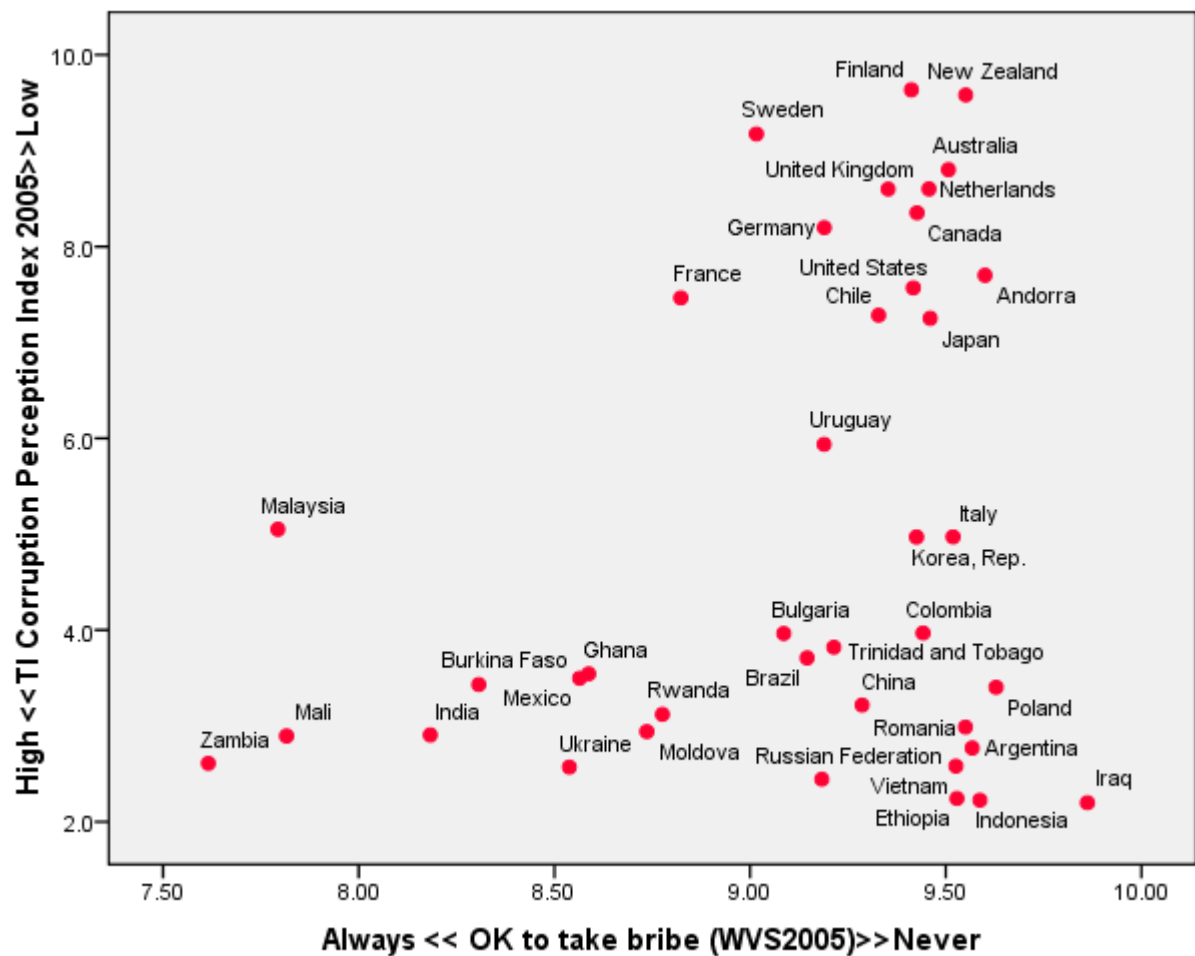
Figure 3: Comparison of the TI Corruption Perception Index with the public's attitudes towards tax-paying



Notes: World Values Survey 2005-7 Q200-201: “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified(1), never be justified (10), or something in-between, using this card...Cheating on taxes if you have a chance..Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties.”

Sources: World Values Survey 2005-7; Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2005 based on expert surveys. http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

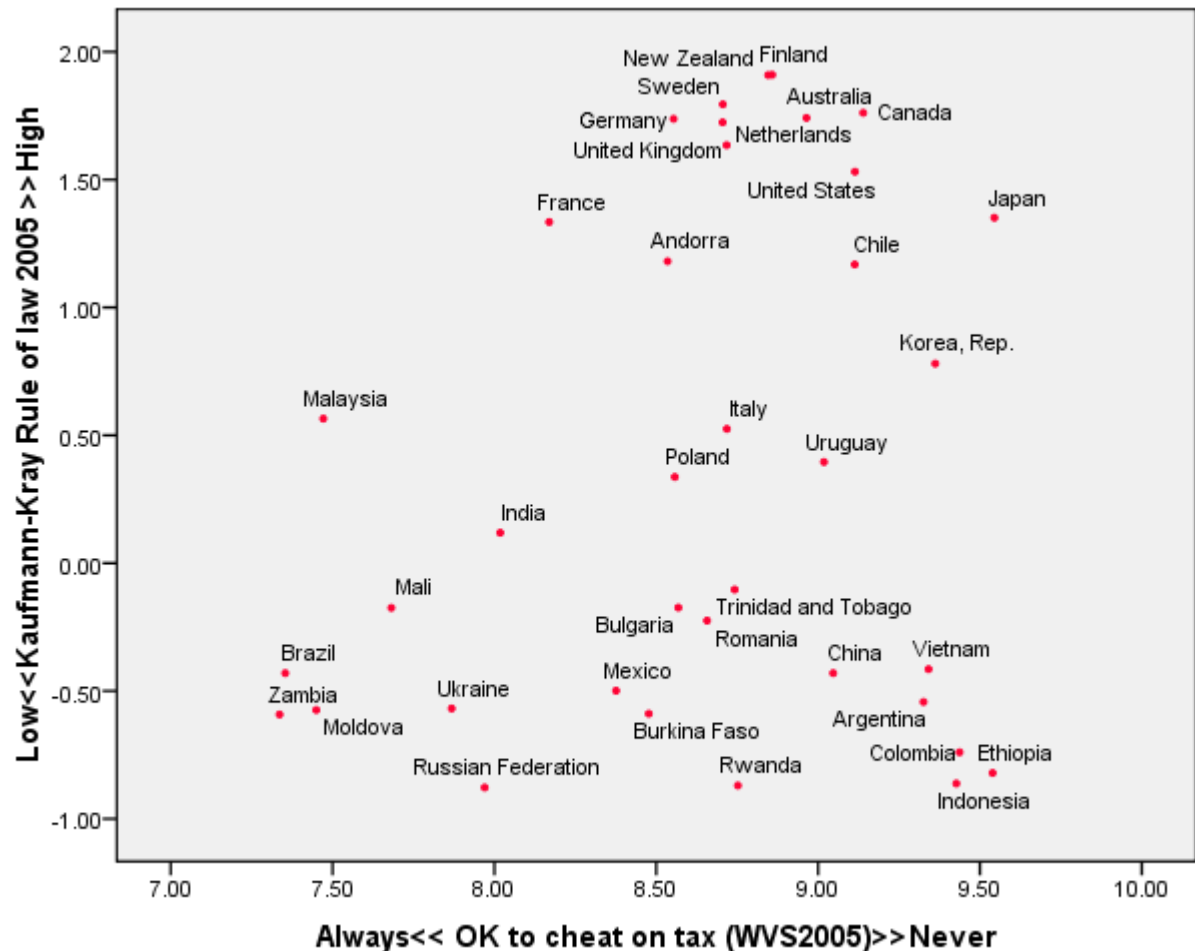
Figure 4: Comparison of the TI Corruption Perception Index with the public's attitudes towards bribe taking



Notes: World Values Survey 2005-7 Q200-201: “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified(1), never be justified (10), or something in-between, using this card... Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties.”

Sources: World Values Survey 2005-7; Transparency International ‘Corruption Perception Index 2005’.

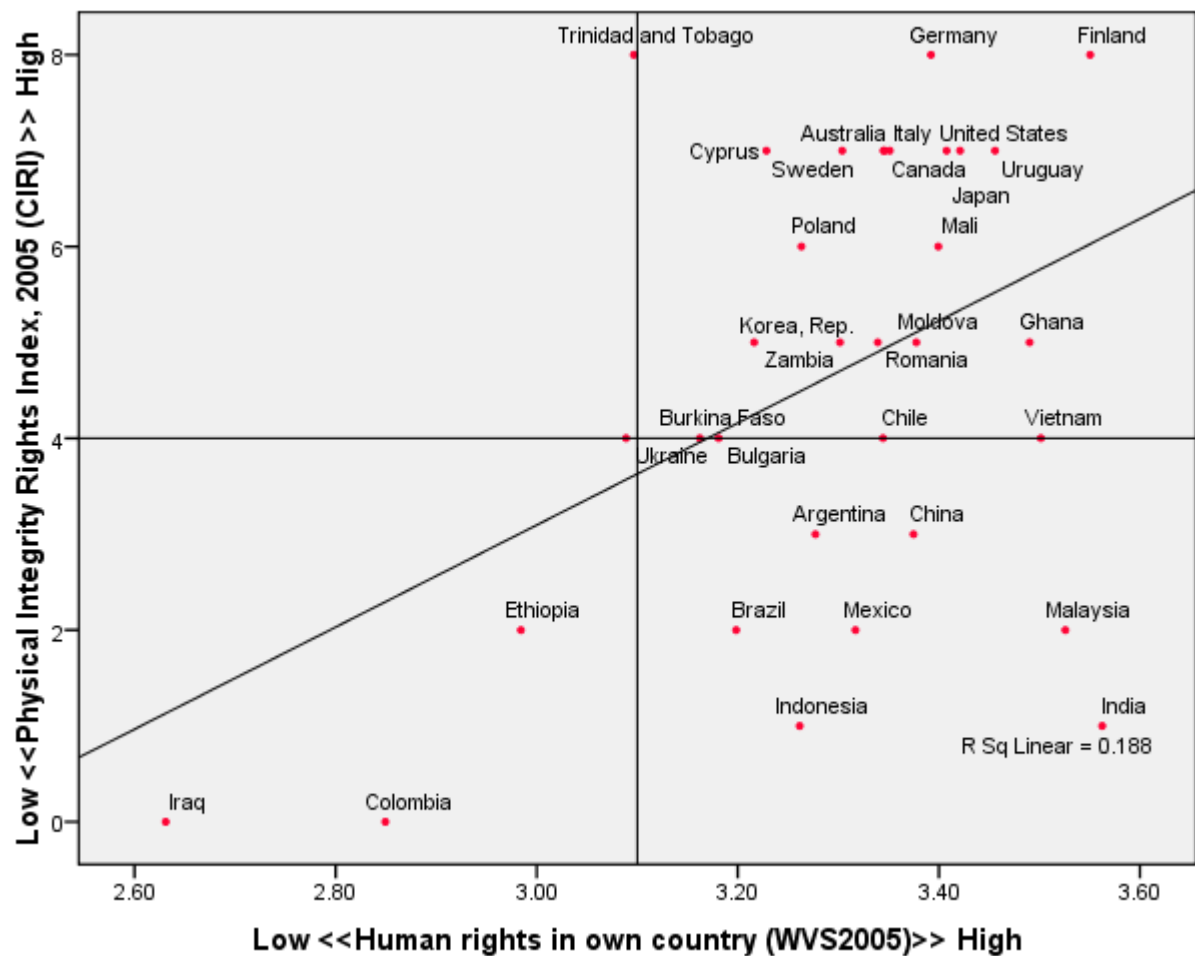
Figure 5: Comparison of the Kaufmann-Kraay Rule of Law Index with the public's attitudes towards tax-paying



Notes: World Values Survey 2005-7 Q200-201: “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified(1), never be justified (10), or something in-between, using this card...Cheating on taxes if you have a chance..Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties.”

Sources: World Values Survey 2005-7; Kaufmann-Kraay Rule of Law Index 2005 (WBI)

Figure 6: Comparison of mass and elite evaluations of human rights



Notes: World Values Survey 2005-7 Q: 164: How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in this country? Do you feel there is.. *A great deal of respect for individual human rights (4), Fairly much respect (3), Not much respect (2), or No respect at all (1)?*”

Sources: David L. Cingranelli and David L. Richards 2004. The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Database Coder Manual. <http://ciri.binghamton.edu/>; World Values Survey 2005-7.

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⁴ Polity IV <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>

⁵ *The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Database Coder Manual*.

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⁶ The World Values Surveys, <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/wvs-samp.html>.