Paper accepted by the panel - Evaluating the State of Democracy: Different Approaches and Methodologies

Evaluating Political Systems: Focus on the Political Performance and the Quality of Democracy

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Introduction
In the comparative politics literature different concepts of performance and quality of a political system are employed; for example it is written about democratic performance, government performance, political performance, quality of democracy and quality of government. However there is no common standard as to what the different concepts mean and what they stand for since the concepts have been understood and treated in different ways. This paper makes an effort to clarify how concepts like performance and quality of a political system are related to each other and suggests that they may be subsumed under the common heading of evaluating political systems. In the first part of this paper I will attempt to clarify and categorize a few important concepts in comparative politics. In the second part of the study the main focus will be to examine in more detail what the concept quality of democracy is and what it stands for. Briefly, the aim with this study is twofold, 1) to categorize different conceptions of performance and quality employed in comparative politics 2) to differentiate the concept quality of democracy from similar concepts. The thesis put forward here is that democratic performance is best understood as an aspect of the input process of the political system whereas government performance is best understood as an aspect of the output process of the political system.

What is a political system?
Before a discussion about different political performance concepts it is necessary to discuss what a political system and political performance are. Almond et al. (1996, 28-29) gives the following definition of a political system: “The political system is a set of institutions concerned with formulating and implementing the collective goals of a society or of groups within it.” They continue to write: “political systems have institutions, agencies, or structures, such as political parties, parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts, which carry on specific activities, or perform functions, which in turn enable the political system to formulate and enforce its politics.” Concerning political performance they (Almond et al. 1996, 39) write that “We call the outputs of a political system-its extractions, distributions, regulations, and symbolic acts, its performance.” Eckstein (1971) said that political performance is about evaluation. Eckstein (1971, 8) stated that “(Measuring political performance is, of course, inherently evaluative: a matter of saying, on some basis, that a polity is doing well or badly, to one degree or another, in absolute terms or relative to other cases.)” Accordingly, it can be seen that a political system has many functions and one of these functions is the perform
function and that function is named the political performance. Based on Eckstein (1971) it can be seen that when the political performance is measured that can be seen as the evaluation of the political process.¹

When political systems are evaluated often the concepts inputs, outputs and outcomes are discussed. Easton (1965, 32) presented a simplified model of a political system, and Figure 1 show a expanded version model of Easton’s simplified model of a political system.

Figure 1 Model of political system (based on Easton 1965, 32)

The input side of the political system is about the access to the political power (demands and support), and the output side is about how the political power is exercised (decisions and actions). There is also a distinction between output and outcomes and as Almond et al. (2004, 43) pointed out: “We have to distinguish between the efforts-the things a government does-and the actual outcome of these efforts.” Accordingly, outputs can be seen as political decisions and actions when outcomes can be seen as the results and the consequences of those political decisions and actions. A simplified outline of a cyclical flow in a political system can be described as follows; the political system is surrounded by the domestic and international environment. The system influences its environment and changes in the environment produce new inputs (demands and support). The new demands and supports are considered in the political system and when new political decisions and action are taken its leads to new outputs. When the new result and consequences (outcomes) interact with the systems

¹ See also Dahl (1967) for a discussion about the evaluation of political systems.
environment new inputs are produced and a new cycle will start.² An applicable example of
the flow in the political system is as follows; the politicians decide on the action of spending a
specific sum of money on social expenditure (output) in the country. The result and the
consequences (outcomes) of the decision and action from the politicians (in this case the level
of social expenditure) can be measured with an indicator such as the level of infant mortality.
The environment will then respond to these results (outcomes) and the political system will
receive new inputs from its environment that will affect subsequent decisions and actions.

Evaluating political systems: an overview
In the late 1960s Dahl (1967) called for political scientists to carryout evaluations of political
systems. And especially in the 1990s and early 2000s many studies which examined different
kinds of political performance were produced. However, only a few studies have tried to
clarify the differences in the concepts in political performance (see e.g. Foweraker and
Krznaric 2000). Political performance is a broad concept, and before a categorization can be
made I see it as necessary to review some previous literature about political performance to
see how the concept has been dealt with earlier and which indicators have been used.
Therefore I will proceed by reviewing some studies; both theoretical and empirical which
have dealt with different performance concepts in comparative politics and analyze how they
have treated different performance concepts.

In a pioneer study of political performance from 1982 Powell investigated political
performance in 29 contemporary democracies. Powell focused on three dimensions of
political performance; the citizen voting participation, government stability, and political
order (absence of turmoil and violence). Powell (1982, 28) included performance measures
such as voting turnout, executive durability, executive control of legislature, rioting, and
deaths by political violence. In the study he investigated the effects of environmental,
institutional, and party system on political performance. Powell also identified three
democratic performance goals, civil liberties, political competition and responsiveness.
Powell (1982, 200) concluded that democracies in general fulfilled those performance goals.

Two classic studies in political science which investigate political performance are Putnam’s
Making Democracy Work (1993) and Lijphart’s Patterns of Democracy (1999). In a majority

² For further discussion about political system see e.g. Easton 1965 and Almond et al. 1996, 2004.
of the studies of political performance the objects of the studies are on the macro level where different countries are the objects of the studies. However Putnam studied regions of Italy, and accordingly the object in his study was on the sub national level. Putnam (1993, 63) investigated the causes of institutional success and failure, and his purpose was to evaluate the policy processes, policy pronouncements and policy implementation in each regional government. Putnam (1993, 65) used 12 indicators of government effectiveness when he compared the institutional performance in 20 regions in Italy. The 12 indicators were cabinet stability, budget promptness, statistical and information service, reform legislation, legislative innovation, day care centers, family clinics, industrial policy instruments, agricultural spending capacity, local health unit expenditures, housing and urban development, and bureaucratic responsiveness. Putnam (1993, 74) created a summary index of the 12 indicators which he called the Index of Institutional Performance.

In Lijphart’s study from 1999 where he describes two types of democracies, consensus democracies and majoritarian democracies he also compared the two types of democracies in several measurements of political performance (see Lijphart 1999 chap. 15 and 16). In general Lijphart found that consensus democracies outperform majoritarian democracies in different types of performance. Lijphart’s indicators cover many different performance areas and he divided the types of performance indicators into three groups. The first group of performance indicators Lijphart named macro-economic management and the control of violence. The group consists of 19 macroeconomic indicators and four indicators of violence. In the first group of performance indicators, for example economic growth, GDP deflator, consumer price index, unemployment, strike activity, budget deficits, riots, and political deaths were included. The second group of performance indicators Lijphart named quality of democracy and the group consist of 17 indicators including for example Dahl’s democracy rating, Vanhanen’s index of democratization, women’s parliamentary representation, women’s cabinet representation, Wilensky’s rating of the family policy, rich-poor ratio, decile ratio, and voter turnout. The third group of indicators Lijphart named kinder and gentler qualities and he identify four different areas in that group of performance, social welfare, the protection of environment, criminal justice, and foreign aid. In total 10 indicators were included in the third group of performance, for example welfare state index, social expenditure, energy efficiency, death penalty, foreign aid, and aid versus defense.

3 Some indicators were used in two different time periods.
In the book The Performance of Democracies: Political Institutions and Public Policy Roller investigated political performance in 21 OECD countries. Roller (2005, 9) meant that she investigated a specific dimension of political performance, effectiveness. Roller (2005, 3) stated that: “Effectiveness is a criterion for evaluating political performance, and it refers to the degree to which desired goals are achieved through political action.” Roller’s model of political effectiveness included five policy areas; foreign policy, domestic security policy, economic policy, social policy, and environmental policy. In the analyzes Roller left out the foreign policy area, and the analyzes in the study included in total 14 outcome indicators of effectiveness in the other four policy areas mentioned above. In domestic security policy Roller included indicators such as murder and manslaughter, robbery and burglary. In economic policy, gross domestic product, unemployment rate and inflation rate were used as indicators, and in social policy infant mortality and poverty rate were included as indicators. Finally in environmental policy Roller included six indicators, emissions of sulphur oxides, emissions of nitrogen oxides, emissions of carbon dioxide, municipal waste production, fertilizer use, and water consumption. Roller (2005, 179) also developed a summary performance index which consisted of indicators for all four policy areas (General Political Effectiveness).

Also Lane and Ersson (2000, 2002) have investigated political performance. In Lane and Ersson (2000) institutional variation and performance were examined and a number of output and outcome indicators were included as dependent variables. They (Lane and Ersson 2000, 65) applied five output indicators, central government revenue, general government consumption, central governments deficits, social security benefit expenditures and military spending. They applied 12 outcome indicators and examples of the outcome indicators include, inflation rates, human development index, income distribution, level of democracy, female representation in politics, political protest and violence, and level of corruption. Also in Lane and Ersson (2002) it was investigated if there were institutional effects on performance, and indicators as GDP/capita, human development index, social security payments, central government revenue, Gini index, and female representation in parliaments were included as performance indicators.

saw the concept liberal democratic performance as the delivery of liberal democratic values, and not as a regime's longevity or government efficacy. Foweraker and Krznaric (2000, 760; 2003, 314) followed Lijphart (1993, 149) and concluded that liberal democratic performance “refers to the degree to which a system meets such democratic norms as representativeness, accountability, equality and participation.” They also make a distinction between democratic performance and government performance and Foweraker and Landman (2002, 45) stated: “studies that focus on macroeconomic management, including rates of growth, inflation and unemployment, or on social policy and welfare provision, or even on executive stability and political violence can be understood as comparing “government performance” in general rather than democratic performance in particular.” They also constructed a database for liberal democratic performance (see e.g. Foweraker and Krznaric 2001, 11) and the democratic values were divided up into two sub groups of values, institutional values, and legal values. The group of institutional values consists of accountability, representation, constraint, and participation and the group of legal values consists of political rights, civil rights, property rights and minority rights.

In the 2000s the research about good governance and the quality of government had increased. And for example in the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg a research team concentrates their research on the quality of government. However, there are different standpoints as to what is meant with the quality of government and good governance and how to measure it. Holmberg et al. (2009, 136-137) stated that good governance is a broad concept and there is not yet any standard definition of what good governance or quality of government (QoG) is. And Charron and Lapuente (2010, 454) stated that there is no perfect indicator to capture the concept QoG. However, Kaufmann et al. (1999) defined governance as: “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.” Kaufmann et al. (1999) definition of governance can be seen as very broad. Rothstein and Teorell (2008, 171) used a much smaller definition of the quality of government, and they reject the idea that public policies should be included in a

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4 Good governance and quality of government are often used as synonymous; see e.g. Rothstein and Teorell 2008, 166.
5 For several other definitions of governance and good governance, see e.g. Grindle 2007, 556-557.
definition of quality of government. Rothstein and Teorell (2008, 161, 171) stated that a key feature of QoG is impartiality in the exercise of public authority, and they defined quality of government as: “the impartiality of institutions that exercise government authority.” Accordingly, they saw how power is exercised as a main criterion for QoG. However Longo (2008, 194) stated “that impartiality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for producing QoG.” And Longo’s (2008, 195) opinion was that actual and potential results of policies should be included in QoG attributes.

There are also different opinions on which indicators should be used to measure quality of government. For example Holmgren (2007, 5) wrote that: “The World Bank’s government effectiveness indicator is on the face of it is one of the best available measures of quality of government.” Holmberg et al. (2009) included three indicators of QoG in their study; the World Bank’s Government Effectiveness Index, its Rule of Law Index, and Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index. Holmberg et al. (2009) stated that these three indicators had been widely used as indicators of QoG. According to the indicator Government Effectiveness (GE), which is often used as an indicator of quality of government Kaufmann et al. (2010, 6) uses the following definition “capturing perceptions of 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.” Concerning what QoG is Charron (2009, 9) wrote that: “the three core areas that serve as empirical proxies for government quality as a concept are low levels of corruption, high levels of bureaucratic quality and effectiveness, and strong democratic institutions and participation among a country’s citizens.” Charron (2009) used the average of three indicators from the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) index as a main measure of quality of government (rule of law, control of corruption and bureaucratic quality), he also used alternative measures for QoG such as, corruption (Transparency International), government effectiveness (World Bank) and ICRG measure of corruption (separate).

Bäck and Hadenius (2008) examined the effect of democratization on the state’s administrative capacity. To measure democracy they used an average of the two democracy indexes Freedom House (political rights) and Polity IV. To measure state’s administrative capacity they applied two measures, “Bureaucracy Quality” and “Control of Corruption” (from the ICRG). The two indicators were combined into an index. In an article published
2009 Altman and Castiglioni examined the impact of democracy and democratic quality on human development. When they measured democracy they employed Polity IV (polity variable) measure, and to measure democratic quality they employed the indicator voter turnout. To measure human development they employed three indicators, adult illiteracy, life expectancy and infant mortality rates.

**Evaluating political systems; a categorization**

After the review of different political performance studies, the next step will be to categorize the concept political performance. Figure 2 shows a categorization of performance and quality concepts in comparative politics, which departs from the evaluation of political systems.
Figure 2 Evaluating political systems: inventory of various types

Political System
- Evaluating Political system
  - Political Performance
    - Democratic Performance
      - Level of Democracy
        - Political Rights
        - Civil Rights
      - Quality of Democracy
    - Government Performance
      - Government Effectiveness
      - Quality of Government
        - Impartiality
        - Bureaucratic Quality
Naturally, the evaluating of political systems departs from political systems and the action in these systems. The main concepts when evaluating political systems are political performance. In a political system there occurs political performance and, political performance can be seen as a type of political action. And when the political performance is examined that can be seen as the evaluation of the political process. As the literature review showed in previous literature there have been different opinions on how political performance should be measured. For example Putnam (1993) preferred output variables when he measured performance in the regions in Italy. On the other side Roller (2005, 32) was hesitant to use output variables as indicators of political performance and she instead used outcome variables such as for example poverty rate and infant mortality when performance were measured. Others, such as Lijphart (1999) and Lane and Ersson (2000) used both output and outcome variables when they measured performance. However I depart from that political performance also should be measured on the input side of the political system (see Figure 1) and therefore political performance can be measured with input variables, output variables and outcomes variables. Accordingly, the political performance represents both the action in the input side and in the output side of the political system.

The main concept political performance is divided into two different concepts, democratic performance and government performance. Democratic performance is mainly political performance on the input side of the political system, while government performance is mainly political performance on the output side of the political system. And the main difference between democratic performance and government performance is that democratic performance deals with levels of democracy and democratic norms, when government performance deals with impartiality of institutions, bureaucracy quality, macroeconomic management and other policy performance as for example welfare system. Concerning the concept democratic performance, I to a high extent support Foweraker and Krznaric (2000, 759) who wrote that liberal democratic performance is about liberal democratic values and not about regime longevity or government efficacy. Compared with Foweraker and Krznaric I distinguish the concept democratic performance. I divide the concept democratic performance into two sub concepts; level of democracy and quality of democracy. The concept level of democracy is about how democratic countries are, (political rights or political rights and civil rights, and indicators which can be used to measure level of democracy are democracy indexes such as Freedom House and Polity IV). The concept quality of democracy is about democratic norms such as for example political participation, political competition and
political equality. According to the concept quality of democracy I to a high extent depart from Lijphart’s (1993) definition of the concept. Lijphart (1993, 149) defined the quality of democracy as: “The term “quality” refers to the degree to which a system meets such democratic norms as representativeness, accountability, equality, and participation.”

Also the concept government performance is divided into two sub concepts; government effectiveness and quality of government. The classification of the sub concept government effectiveness is to a high extent based on Roller’s (2005) political effectiveness concept which has a similarity with Almond and Powell’s political productivity concept (see e.g. Almond et al. 1996). As earlier mentioned Roller (2005, 3) wrote that “Effectiveness is a criterion for evaluating political performance, and it refers to the degree to which desired goals are achieved through political action”. Roller (2005, 29) divided the concept political effectiveness into five different policy areas, foreign policy, domestic security policy, economic policy, social policy (welfare state), and environmental policy. I concluded that a great part of government performance measures also fit into these five different policy areas. According to that, I divide government effectiveness into five different sub concepts; foreign policy performance, domestic security policy performance, economic policy performance, social policy performance, and environmental policy performance.

The other sub concept of government performance is quality of government (QoG). As earlier mentioned there is no common definition of the concept quality of government. In some ways the QoG can be seen as similar with the government effectiveness concept; however the measure bureaucratic quality is often included as a measure of QoG (see e.g. Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Charron 2009), and also impartiality in the exercise of public authority had been considered as important for QoG (see e.g. Rothstein and Teorell 2008). As for example in Kaufmann et al. (1999) definition of quality of governance, the effectiveness of government is included in the definition, while for example Rothstein and Teorell (2008) don’t include effectiveness of government in their definition of QoG. I argue that effectiveness can’t always be considered the same as bureaucratic quality and impartiality, and therefore I see QoG as a separate sub concept of government performance.

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6 A further discussion about the quality of democracy and a motivation for distinguishing the concept democratic performance is presented in a later part of this study.

7 I also include cabinet stability as a measure of QoG. Putnam (1993, 65) wrote that “institutional performance must be reasonably durable, not volatile.” And Putnam’s opinion (1993, 67) was that stable cabinets were able to pursue a coherent line of policy. Even if I don’t consider cabinet stability as an ideal indicator of QoG I see it as
The evaluation of political systems; how does the categorization of political performance fit with previous studies?

Table 1 show the studies which were reviewed earlier and how they are classified in the categorization of political performance presented in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies</th>
<th>Level of Democracy</th>
<th>Quality of Democracy</th>
<th>Government Effectiveness</th>
<th>Quality of Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powell (1982)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Putnam (1993)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lijphart (1999)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane and Ersson (2000, 2002)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foweraker and Krznaric (2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roller (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bäck and Hadenius (2008)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altman and Castiglioni (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charron (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holmberg et al. (2009)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</table>

Concerning Powell’s (1982) study, his three dimensions of political performance, citizen voting participation, political order (absence of turmoil and violence) and government stability, can be seen as a mix of democratic performance and government performance. Where the first dimension participation (voter turnout) can be seen as a dimension of democratic performance (quality of democracy), and the second dimension political order (rioting, and deaths by political violence) can be seen as a dimension of government performance (government effectiveness, domestic security policy). Powell’s third dimension, government stability (executive durability and executive control of legislative) can also be seen as a dimension of government performance (quality of government). Putnam’s (1993) study of regions of Italy can be seen as a study of government performance. The 12 indicators Putnam used for evaluating the policy processes, policy pronouncements and policy implementation include indicators of both government effectiveness (reform legislation, legislative innovation, day care centers, family clinics, industrial policy instruments, more relevant to include as a measure of QoG than to include it as a measure of any of the sub concepts of government effectiveness.
agricultural spending capacity, local health unit expenditures, and housing and urban development), and quality of government (cabinet stability, budget promptness, statistical and information services, and bureaucratic responsiveness).

Lijphart’s (1999) performance dimensions and indicators can be seen as a mix of democratic performance and government performance. Where values such as electoral turnout, women’s representation in parliaments and governments (quality of democracy) and Dahl’s rating (level of democracy) can be seen as values of democratic performance. Values such as economic growth (economic policy), welfare state index (social policy), energy efficiency (environment policy) and death penalty (domestic security policy) can be seen as values of government performance (government effectiveness). Lane and Ersson’s (2000, 2002) performance indicators can be seen as a mix of democratic performance and government performance. Where indicators such as social security payments (social policy), inflation rates (economic policy) can be seen as indicators of government performance (government effectiveness) and female representation in parliaments (quality of democracy) and level of democracy (Freedom House) can be seen as an indicators of democratic performance.

The 21 performance indicators presented in Foweraker and Krznaric (2003) consist both of democratic performance and government performance indicators. Concerning democratic performance, indicators as political competition (size of legislative/number seats largest party), voter turnout in legislative and presidential elections, and women’s representation in parliaments can be seen as indicators of quality of democracy. Indicators as competitiveness of participation, trade union rights, and government media censorship can be seen as indicators of democracy (level of democracy). When military spending (domestic security policy), and number of prisoners per 100 000 inhabitant (domestic security policy) are indicators of government performance (government effectiveness).

Roller (2005) who investigated different policy areas and included four sub concepts of government performance (domestic security policy performance, economic policy performance, social policy performance, and environmental policy performance) can be seen as a study about government performance (government effectiveness). Bäck and Hadenius (2008) study about democracy and state capacity can be seen as a study which deals with both democratic performance (level of democracy, political rights) and government performance (quality of government). Altman and Castiglioni’s (2009) study consist of both democratic
performance and government performance. Where Polity IV measure is an indicator of the level of democracy, and voter turnout is an indicator of the quality of democracy. The three indicators of human development (adult illiteracy, life expectancy, and infant mortality rate) are indicators of government effectiveness. Charron (2009) and Holmberg et al. (2009) studies can be treated as studies about government performance (quality of government).

**Quality of democracy**

After distinguishing different political performance concepts the next step in the study will be to discuss the concept quality of democracy in more detail. To start with I have reviewed how some previous studies have dealt with the concept quality of democracy and examined if these previous studies have treated the concept quality of democracy in a similar way, to how it is categorized in this study.

**Dimensions and indicators of the quality of democracy: an overview**

A number of researchers have previously discussed and measured the quality of democracy for example Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002), Diamond and Morlino (2005), Lijphart (1999) and Stålfors (2008). Table 2 gives an overview of the review of the different dimensions of quality of democracy which were included and discussed in these four studies.\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Altman and Pérez-Liñán</th>
<th>Diamond and Morlino (eds)</th>
<th>Lijphart</th>
<th>Stålfors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of democracy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s representation</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political equality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral participation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with democracy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government-Voter proximity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability and corruption</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Stuart Mill's hypotheses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rule of law</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vertical accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horizontal accountability</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective competition</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) Instead for the term dimension Lijphart used the term set and Stålfors used the term component. In this study I use the term dimension rather than the terms set or component.
In total there are 19 different dimensions which have been used in the four studies mentioned above. However some of these dimensions have similarities with each other but different researchers had named the dimensions differently. For example Lijphart, and Stålfors named one dimension electoral participation, when Altman and Pérez-Liñán, and Diamond and Morlino named a similar dimension participation. Lijphart named one dimension political equality when Diamond and Morlino, and Stålfors named a similar dimension equality. Lijphart (1999) named one dimension satisfaction with democracy when a similar dimension in Diamond and Morlino (2005), and Stålfors (2008) was named responsiveness. Concerning the indicators of quality of democracy Table 3 gives a summary of which indicators had been used to measure quality of democracy in three of the reviewed studies. It should be mentioned that Altman and Pérez-Liñán, Lijphart, and Stålfors had used quantitative measurements of the quality of democracy. In the book edited by Diamond and Morlino both quantitative and qualitative measurements were used. The book included six binary comparisons which were written by different researchers and they didn’t use the same indicators in the binary comparisons when they examined the eight dimensions of quality of democracy (the rule of law, participation, competition, vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, freedom, equality, and responsiveness). And in total there were so many different indicators included so it is not practicable to show them all in a table. Therefore the indicators which have been used in Diamond and Morlino’s book are not included in Table 3 but some of those indicators are discussed later in this study.

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9 The six binary comparisons were written by; López-Pintor and Morlino (Italy and Spain), Hagopian (Brazil and Chile), Mungiu-Pippidi (Poland and Romania), Ganguly (Bangladesh and India), Chu and Chull Shin (Taiwan and South Korea), and Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi (Ghana and South Africa).
Table 3 Content of indicators of quality of democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Altman and Pérez-Liñán</th>
<th>Lijphart</th>
<th>Stålfors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dahl rating</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanhanen rating</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s representation in parliaments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s representation in governments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich-poor ratio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decile ratio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of power resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with democracy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential satisfaction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government distance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter distance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption index</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular cabinet support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.S. Mill criterion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political transformation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Empowerment index</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-related development index</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gini index</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for regime principle</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for regime performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of rule of law</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective competition</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that in total, 28 indicators of the quality of democracy had been used in the three studies of Altman and Pérez-Liñán, Lijphart, and Stålfors. Tables 2 and 3 show that Altman and Pérez-Liñán used the same indicators as dimensions (civil rights, participation and effective competition); however they measured participation with the indicator voter turnout and this means that the indicator voter turnout was used in all three studies. With a comparison of the indicators Lijphart and Stålfors had used it shows that both of them had used the indicators women’s representation in parliaments, women’s representation in governments, voter turnout, and level of corruption. When Stålfors measured support for regime performance he used the survey question satisfaction with democracy, which is the same question which Lijphart used when he measured satisfaction with democracy.

The next step will be to examine how the reviewed studies have dealt with the concept, quality of democracy compared with the categorization presented in this study. Table 4 shows an overview of how the 28 indicators fit the categorization of the quality of democracy presented in this study.
To start with Altman and Pérez-Liñán indicators can be seen as indicators of democratic performance where participation (voter turnout) and effective competition can be seen as indicators of quality of democracy and the indicator civil rights is an indicator of the level of democracy. Concerning Lijphart’s indicators, Dahl’s rating is an indicator of level of democracy. Vanhanen’s index of democratization, women’s representation in parliaments, women’s representation in governments, voter turnout, satisfaction with democracy, differential satisfaction, government distance, voter distance, corruption, popular cabinet support, and J.S. Mill criterion are indicators of quality of democracy. Indicators such as family policy (economic policy/social policy) rich-poor ratio (social policy), decile ratio (social policy), and index of power resources (economic policy/social policy) can be seen as indicators of government performance (government effectiveness).

Several of Stålfors (2008) indicators are indicators of democratic performance; where the indicators democratic development (Freedom House) and democratic index (EIU) are indicators of democracy (level of democracy). The indicators women’s parliamentary representation in parliaments and governments can be seen as indicators of quality of democracy.
participation, women in governmental at ministerial level, election turnout, index of rule of law, and index of corruption can be seen as indicators of quality of democracy. The indicator Gini index can be seen as an indicator of government performance (government effectiveness). Stålfors used two survey questions to measure the dimension responsiveness, and the question were about rejection of all non-democratic alternatives (support for regime principle) and satisfaction with democracy (support for regime performance). The two survey questions can be seen as indicators of the quality of democracy. However it can be called into question if the people who answer the questions are truly considering the democratic system (quality of democracy) or are they really considering the government performance.

There are some indicators which can be seen difficult to classify if they measure government performance or democratic performance and to examine what those indicators measure, it is necessary to look at them more carefully. Bertelsmann Stiftung offer several indexes of transformation; 1) the status index which consist of political transformation and economic transformation, 2) the management index, and 3) the transformation index which is based on the status index and the management index. Stålfors (2008) used the management index as an indicator of quality of democracy. The Bertelsmann index defines management as¹⁰:

“Management here is defined as the performance, capacity and accountability of the political leadership, i.e., of those political actors who have the power and responsibility to shape or determine public policy in a society. These actors include not only governments and political elites, but also nongovernmental organizations that can play an important role in transformation.” The management index is based on criteria’s of steering capability, resource efficiency, consensus-building, international cooperation and level of difficulty. Based on the 20 questions that the index is based on I see the Bertelsmann management index as an index which measures government performance (both government effectiveness and quality of government) and not democratic performance (quality of democracy). The Bertelsmann status index which consists of political transformation and economic transformation can be seen as an index which combines government performance and democratic performance.¹¹

Accordingly, the aggregated index; the Bertelsmann Transformation index can therefore be seen as an index which measures both democratic performance and government performance.

¹¹ Ibid.
Therefore, none of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation indexes can be seen as proper indicators of quality of democracy.

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) measures gender inequalities in three areas: political participation and decision making, economic participation and decision making, and power over economic resources.\textsuperscript{12} The GEM index can be seen as a measure which combines democratic performance and government performance. Where political participation and decision making (where female and male shares of parliamentary seats is used as an indicator) can be seen as a dimension (area) of democratic performance (quality of democracy). While the dimensions (areas) economic participation and decision making, and power over economic resources can be seen as indicators of gender inequalities in government performance (government effectiveness). The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) measures the inequalities between men and women in life expectancy, adult literacy, gross enrolment ratio and earned income.\textsuperscript{13} The index can be seen as a gender related index of government performance (government effectiveness, social policy).

Discussion
The review of some previous studies (dimensions and indicators) that are summarized in Tables 2 and 3 shows that there are several diverse dimensions and several diverse ways to operationalize and measure the quality of democracy that have been used in the study of quality of democracy. According to my categorization of political performance concepts I see Altman and Pérez-Liñán dimension; civil rights as a dimension of democracy (level of democracy). I see the other different dimensions which have been suggested in the studies mentioned above mainly as relevant dimensions of the quality of democracy. Concerning the indicators which have been used to measure the dimensions of quality of democracy, many different indicators have been employed. However, the review of previous studies shows that it can be seen as difficult to identify empirical indicators to measure some of the dimensions of the quality of democracy. I am doubtful of the indicators which have been used to measure some of the dimensions of quality of democracy. And I don’t consider several of those indicators as measures of quality of democracy. Examples of these indicators are: adult illiteracy, GDP/capita, gender-related development index, Gini coefficient, infant malnourished, income level below the national poverty line, infant mortality, life expectancy,

\textsuperscript{12} http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi_gem/
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
pension system, share of income of top 10 %, social expenditures, taxation, and women’s participation in public life.\textsuperscript{14}

**Equality dimension**

The main differences in how I treat the concept quality of democracy and how some other researchers have treated it is found in the equality dimension. For example Lijphart, Stålfors, and several authors of the case studies in Diamond and Morlino’s book included indicators of social policy as indicators of quality of democracy. My standpoint is that wealth, socio-economic security and socio-economic equality are indicators of social policy (see e.g. Roller 2005, 29) which I treat as a sub concept of government effectiveness and not as indicators of quality of democracy. Compared with for example Rueschemeyer (2005, 47-61) I use a narrower definition of the quality of democracy as I don’t include social and economic equality in the equality dimension of quality of democracy. In the equality dimension I see it relevant to include political equality such as gender equalities in political representation, and indicators which can be employed to measure that dimension are women’s representation in parliaments and women’s representation in governments.

There are authors who have a skeptical view of the studies of the quality of democracy (see e.g. Platter 2005). For the credibility of the concept quality of democracy it is important to distinguish the concept from similar concept. From my point of view the definition of quality of democracy will be too broad if economic and social equality are included in the concept. As Platter (2005, 78) pointed out “democracy is a form of government that must not only be democratic but also effectively govern.” I mean that qualities of a democratic system are not the same as the effectiveness of a political system. Accordingly, what has government effectiveness to do with democracy and the quality of democracy? If economic policy and social policy are included in the concept quality of democracy, what is then the difference between government effectiveness and the quality of democracy? Of course it is relevant and important to examine different types of effectiveness performance, but when that is done the quality of democracy is not examined instead the government effectiveness (government performance) is examined.

\textsuperscript{14}See also Table 4.
Responsiveness dimension

Another dimension which I see some problematic aspects in, is the responsiveness dimension. Powell (2005, 62) defines responsiveness as follows: “Democratic responsiveness” is what occurs when the democratic process induces the government to form and implement policies that the citizens want.” I see it relevant to include responsiveness as a dimension of the quality of democracy because it is important for the legitimacy of a democratic system that policies correspond to citizen demands. To measure responsiveness often survey questions are used. However Powell (2005, 63) stated that it is difficult to compare responsiveness between countries, and I see some problems to with measuring the responsiveness dimension. I mean that the dimension is closely related to the concept government performance (government effectiveness/quality of government) and it can be called into question if the people who answer the questions about democracy and government consider the democratic system or the government performance. For example I’m hesitant that survey questions such as; how well or bad current government is at creating jobs, and keeping prices stable are proper indicators of the responsiveness dimension of the quality of democracy (see Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi 2005, 258). A survey question which has been used to measure responsiveness is “satisfaction with democracy” (see e.g. Lijphart 1999, 286; Stålfors 2008, 184-187), and Powell (2005, 73) suggested to use the survey question “how well people think democracy is “working” in their own country” to measure the responsiveness dimension. I see it as relevant to use that sort of survey questions to measure the responsiveness dimension of the quality of democracy. However, researchers have to be very carefully when they select survey questions to measure the dimension responsiveness of the quality of democracy; otherwise it poses a risk to instead measure government performance.

Distinguish between level of democracy and quality of democracy

As mentioned earlier I see it as relevant and necessary to distinguish the concept quality of democracy from other similar concepts. I also distinguish the concept from the concept democracy (level of democracy). However, some researchers have classified democracy (level of democracy) and quality of democracy as the same concept, and some studies have used democracy as an indicator of the quality of democracy (see e.g. Stålfors 2008, Lijphart 1999). Therefore it can be seen as necessary and important to state my motives for distinguishing the two concepts.
The study of quality of democracy can be seen as the third generation of democratization studies (see e.g. Mazzuca 2010, 335). The first generation of democratization studies was concentrated on transitions from dictatorships to democratic regimes, and the second generation of studies was concentrated on the consolidation of democracy. Nowadays when many countries in the world are consolidated democracies the focus in research has shifted to the quality of the democracy in these countries. Accordingly, a normative view of democratization can be seen as countries should 1) be democracies 2) develop to be consolidated democracies, and 3) develop a high level of the quality of democracy.

Democracy itself is a type of political regime, and in democratic regimes the democratic qualities in these regimes can be examined. When evaluating these democratic qualities in democratic regimes it can be seen as studies of quality of democracy. These qualities are about norms and legitimacy of the democratic system and examples of relevant dimensions which can be included in the concept are political participation, political competition, political equality and rule of law.

I will describe two examples which indicate the difference between democracy and quality of democracy. In a democratic system one main criterion is the right to vote (see e.g. Dahl 1971), and when examining if countries are democracies or not it is important to investigate if countries allow their citizens to vote in elections. When the democratic quality is measured only democratic countries are of interest, and all democratic countries have fulfilled the criterion the right to vote in election, and therefore it is not of interest to examine the right to vote in democratic countries (there is no variation to explain). Instead the interest for the quality of democracy in this example is the legitimacy of the election. If voter turnout is low the legitimacy of the election can come into question, and therefore it is examined how large a share of the population make use of their right to vote. Accordingly the right to vote is a measure of democracy, and voter turnout is a measure of quality of democracy. A further example of the different between democracy and quality of democracy is political competition. One main criterion for democracy is the right of political leaders to compete for support and right of political leaders to compete for votes (see e.g. Dahl 1971). All democratic countries fulfill that criterion. However, competition between parties can be seen as important for the legitimacy in a democratic system and with a weak opposition the legitimacy of the political competition can come into question. Therefore it is important to measure the level of political competition in democratic system, and that is a measure of the quality of democracy. Accordingly, the right of political leaders to compete for support and right of political leaders...
to compete for votes is a criterion and a measure of democracy, and to examine the level of
the political competition in democratic systems is a measure of quality of democracy. On the
basis of the examples mentioned above it can be seen as when countries fulfill the basic
conditions of democracy as political rights (and civil rights depending on which definition of
democracy is used), then it is relevant to examine the level of legitimacy and democratic
norms in the democratic system, which is named the quality of democracy. Accordingly, if
countries do not fulfill the basic conditions of democracy it is not relevant to measure the
quality of democracy in these countries. That means that studies in quality of democracy
depart from democracy and democratic countries that have completed the democratic
consolidation. To summarize; if democracy itself is included in the concept, quality of
democracy, it is not clear to me how democracy and the concept, quality of democracy can be
distinguished from each other.

There are also other advantages of differentiating the level of democracy and the quality of
democracy from each other. For example when democratic performance in similar countries,
as for example Western democracies is examined, almost all the Western democracies have
very high levels of democracy in measures of democracy such as Freedom House and Polity
IV. Accordingly, the level of democracy fails to differentiate the level of democratic
performance in Western democracies and therefore there is no reason to compare the level of
democracy in these countries. But in indicators of the quality of democracy Western
democracies also vary in their performance and therefore it is possible to examine democratic
performance in similar countries such as the Western democracies by comparing the quality
of democracy.

Quality of democracy and quality of government: similarity and diversity
Concerning the two quality concepts which are nowadays often used in comparative politics;
quality of democracy and quality of government (good governance) and their similarity and
their diversity it can be seen as the quality of democracy is a sub concept of democratic
performance and is about legitimacy and democratic norms in a democratic system. Quality of
government can be seen to be a concept which is a sub concept of government performance
and is about impartiality and bureaucracy quality. The quality of democracy is in general
measured on the input side of the political system when quality of government is measured on
the output side of the political system. However there are indicators which had been used as
both indicators of the quality of democracy and of the quality of government. The best known
example of that is presumably the indicator level of corruption. Even though the same indicator is used for the two different quality concepts the indicator corruption is used for different purposes. When corruption is applied as an indicator of the quality of democracy it can be seen as an indicator of the level of legitimacy in a democratic system. A motivation to include corruption as an indicator of the quality of democracy is therefore that in democratic systems all citizens should be fairly and equitably treated by public officials. And in systems where corruption occurs all citizens are not treated fairly and equitably by public officials. When corruption is used as an indicator for the quality of government it can be seen as an indicator of impartiality and bureaucracy quality and for example Bäck and Hadenius (2008, 5) stated that corruption can be seen as an indirect measurement of the quality of administration.

Conclusions
This study has addressed the missing categorizations of different concepts in comparative politics. The cornerstone and the contribution of this study were to make a categorization of the different concepts of performance and quality in comparative politics, and to differentiate the concept quality of democracy from similar concepts. For that, a categorization of the evaluation of the political system was employed. The categorization departed from the concept political performance. The suggestion was that political performance can be measured on the input side and the output side of the political system. Accordingly the political performance can be measured with input variables, output variables and outcomes variables. The concept political performance is mapped into two sub concepts, democratic performance and government performance. The main difference between the two sub concepts of political performance is that democratic performance deals with levels of democracy and democratic norms, when government performance deals with impartiality of institutions, bureaucracy quality, macroeconomic management and other policy performance as for example welfare system. The democratic performance is mainly measured on the input side of the political system when the government performance is mainly measured on the output side of the political system. Democratic performance and government performance are also divided into different sub concepts. Democratic performance is divided into two sub concepts democracy (level of democracy) and quality of democracy. Government performance is also divided into two sub concepts government effectiveness and quality of government.
In this study the concept quality of democracy was studied in detail. The review of some previous studies shows that several diverse dimensions and several diverse ways to operationalize and measure the quality of democracy have been used in the study of quality of democracy. The overview of previous studies also shows that there is no consensus on what the concept quality of democracy stands for. According to the categorization of political performance concepts presented in this study I don’t consider several of those indicators which have been used in previous research as measures of quality of democracy. The main differences in how I treat the concept quality of democracy and how some other studies have treated it is found in the equality dimension. From my categorization of political performance I treat wealth, socio-economic security, and socio-economic equality as indicators of social policy as a sub concept of government effectiveness and not as indicators of quality of democracy. For the credibility of the concept quality of democracy and to avoid skeptical opinions about the concept I see it as necessary to define the concept quite narrowly and to especially differentiate the concept from similar concepts. Therefore in this study the quality of democracy is defined as: *By the term quality of democracy it is meant the level of legitimacy in a democratic system in factors of democratic norms such as political participation, political competition, political equality, and rule of law. According to the definition, the quality of democracy can be seen as a measurement of how well or badly democratic countries perform in democratic norms.*

**References**


(Accessed June 8, 2011).


