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Key Findings (Summary Abstract) of the Democracy Ranking 2011 and of the Democracy Improvement Ranking 2011

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1. General conceptual-methodic statements

The Democracy Ranking 2011 compares indicator-based the years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. Furthermore, based on that comparison, also a Democracy Improvement Ranking 2011 is being produced.¹ The Democracy Ranking 2011 looks at 110 countries closer. All countries in the world are covered with a population of at least one million and that are categorized by Freedom House as “free” or “partly free” during the years 2009 and 2010. In case of a substantial missing of indicator data, a few further countries were dropped again. The Democracy Ranking 2001 refers additionally to more countries that are not being acknowledged by Freedom House as free or partly free. These are: China and Russia (because of their global political and economic weight in the world); and Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen – this should help summarizing developments shortly before the *Arab Spring* of this year (2011) in some of the core countries. Scores for China and Russia and for the other six Arab countries (see above) should be qualified only as “virtual scores”.

The conceptual formula for the quality of democracy of the Democracy Ranking is:

Quality of Democracy = (freedom + other characteristics of the political system) + (performance of the non-political dimensions).

The conceptual formula of the Democracy Ranking has been developed independently², but features structural similarities with the formula of Guillermo O’Donnell, who defines quality of democracy based on an interaction of human rights and human development.³ *To a certain extent, the Democracy Ranking’s conceptual formula appears as a next step of operationalization and measurement of the theoretical reflections of O’Donnell on democracy and the quality of democracy* (see **Figure 1** below).

In reference to individual indicators, the Democracy Ranking aggregates the following dimensions with the following weights into the final total scores: politics: 50%; gender: 10%; economy: 10%; knowledge: 10%; health: 10%; and the environment: 10%. From this it follows that the non-political dimension, combined together, are as important as the whole political dimension. *The Democracy Ranking applies a broad understanding of democracy and the quality of democracy, emphasizing the importance of sustainable development. Sustainable development underscores that a comprehensive development and evolution of society, economy and democracy ultimately demands (in the long run) a co-development across different dimensions and sectors of a society as well as the economy, also acknowledging the importance of the environment (natural environments) of society.*⁴

¹) The Democracy Ranking refers to those years with the latest available empirical data information. As of December 2011, this implies (realistically) that in most cases the year 2010 represents the last complete year.

²) Campbell, David F. J. / Miklós Sükösd (eds.) (2002). Feasibility Study for a Quality Ranking of Democracies. Vienna: Global Democracy Award (http://www.democracyranking.org/downloads/feasibility_study-a4-e-01.pdf).

³) O’Donnell, Guillermo (2004). Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy, 9-92, in: Guillermo O’Donnell / Jorge Vargas Cullell / Osvaldo M. Iazzetta (eds.): The Quality of Democracy. Theory and Applications. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

⁴) See here, forthcoming: Carayannis, Elias G. / David F. J. Campbell (2012). Mode 3 Knowledge Production in Quadruple Helix Innovation Systems. 21st-Century Democracy, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship for Development. SpringerBriefs in Business, Volume 7. New York: Springer (<http://www.springer.com/business+%26+management/book/978-1-4614-2061-3>).

In metaphoric terms, the Democracy Ranking displays what happens when the freedom ratings of Freedom House and the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Program are being pooled together into a comprehensive picture. So far, international organizations were and often are reluctant in doing so. One rationale of the Democracy Ranking, for such an endeavor, is to link discussions on democracy and the quality of democracy closer to aspects of sustainable development. The newly released Human Development Report of this year (2011) also emphasizes "Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All".⁵ Sustainability (and thinking in terms of sustainability and sustainable development) integrates finally quality of democracy with human rights and human development.

Figure 1: Two different (but related) conceptual formulas for the quality of democracy.

Approach of Guillermo O'Donnell:

Quality of Democracy = (human rights) & (human development)

Approach of the "Democracy Ranking of the Quality of Democracy":

Quality of Democracy = (freedom & other characteristics of the political system) & (performance of the non-political dimensions)

Note: "Freedom" according to "Freedom House".

Source for O'Donnell:
 Guillermo O'Donnell (2004). Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy, 9-92, in: Guillermo O'Donnell / Jorge Vargas Cullell / Osvaldo M. Iazzetta (eds.): The Quality of Democracy. Theory and Applications. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Source general:
 David F.J. Campbell (2008). The Basic Concept for the Democracy Ranking of the Quality of Democracy. Vienna: Democracy Ranking.
http://www.democracyranking.org/downloads/basic_concept_democracy_ranking_2008_A4.pdf

⁵) For a free download see: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/>

2. The general status of democracy and the quality of democracy in the world

Based on the empirical metrics of the underlying conceptual formula of the Democracy Ranking, the following general trends can be set up for discussion:

1. **General increase of the quality of democracy in the world:** Most importantly, during the five-year period of 2006-2007 and 2009-2010, the quality of democracy has increased in the world. In 73 countries there were increases, in only 37 countries there were decreases. Across all 110 covered countries, the average increase of the quality of democracy scores at 0.6. Based on this macro-trend, there are no general signs of a crisis of democracy. Quite the contrary appears to be the case: there still is a considerable momentum of progress of democracy and the quality of democracy in the world. This year and in the recent years before, the attention of the public and of the media has focused, to a large extent, on the current financial crisis and its ramifications for economic prospects. These considerations should be taken seriously. However, the mainstream media discourses pushed aside the global advances and achievements of democracy after 2005. Therefore, it appears necessary to rebalance the general picture by referring to the recent success stories of democracy. Of course, there is a potential and real danger that the current financial and economic problems could constrain (perhaps even push back) the near-future prospects of democracy in the world.
2. **Increase of the quality of democracy in South America as well as in South Asia and South-East Asia:** South America, South Asia and South-East Asia can be identified as the three world regions, where democracy and the quality of democracy progressed the most. This underscores the key importance of many of the newly industrialized countries for further increases in the quality of democracy in the contemporary world. Some of the highest quality-of-democracy increases were achieved by medium ranking (e.g., Bangladesh) or lower ranking or low-ranking (e.g., Pakistan) countries. This should be taken into account. It appears to be so important not to narrow or to limit too closely the “perception of democracy” to the top-ranking established (“old”) democracies of the OECD (advanced economies). This neglects the global picture of democracy in the world. Here we may also throw out the question (without making any concrete assertion), to which extent the current financial-economic problems may be more problems of the advanced economies in the established OECD democracies?
 - 2.1. **South America:** Decreases in the quality of democracy were in Columbia (-0.3) and Venezuela (-1.5). Bolivia has no total score changes. In all other (covered) countries in South America, there were increases of the quality of democracy, most notably in: Paraguay (+3.5), Uruguay (+2.3), Chile (+1.3), Argentina (+1.1), and Brazil (+0.9).
 - 2.2. **Central America as a trouble spot for democracy:** With 70.2 points, Costa Rica scores highest in all of Central America (and only behind Uruguay and Chile in all of Latin America). Costa Rica (+2.0), Panama (+1.8), Guatemala (+1.4), the Dominican Republic (+1.3), and El Salvador (+1.0) achieved score gains. However, these examples of increases are contrasted by several countries with decreases in their quality of democracy, which are: Jamaica (-0.3), Mexico (-1.9) and Honduras (-2.4). Mexico represents a dramatic case of democracy decline, with considerable score decreases over the dimension of politics, the economy and the environment.

- 2.3. **South Asia and South-East Asia:** With the exception of the Philippines (-1.1) and of Sri Lanka (-1.8), all (covered) countries of South and South-East Asia achieved increases in their quality-of-democracy scores. It should be emphasized that four of the top-ten ranking countries locate in these two world regions: Bangladesh (+6.3), Pakistan (+4.4), Thailand (+2.6), and Nepal (+2.5).
- 2.3.1. **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh is in several respects interesting. First of all, Bangladesh clearly is world-wide the country with the highest score increases for its democracy when comparing the years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. Second, Bangladesh expresses sustainable development with score increases over all dimensions (only with a tie in the environmental dimension). Third, concerning the aggregate score levels, Bangladesh has reached almost the levels of India, improving from 42.8 in 2006-2007 (India: 49.7) to 49.1 in 2009-2010 (India: 50.7). India, on the contrary, achieved only a modest increase of its quality of democracy during the same period of time (+1.0), also suffering from draw-backs on its economic dimension. Fourth, Bangladesh represents a country with an overwhelming Muslim population majority (almost 90%). In that respect, Bangladesh may serve as an important success story of and for democracy in the Muslim world, refuting simple prejudices and stereotypes.
- 2.3.2. **Pakistan:** Pakistan scores low on the aggregate level of democracy – 32.7 in 2006-2007 and 37.1 in 2009-2010. However, Pakistan ranks world-wide third (at par with Togo) regarding its improvement of democracy. This complicates easy interpretations. Most of the score increases of Pakistan result from improvements on the political dimension. Democracy progress in Pakistan, however, still appears fragile and not being accompanied by a broad sustainable development. On the dimensions of the economy and the environment, the scores even decreased.
- 2.3.3. **Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in comparison – summary of propositions:** For the current debates, Bangladesh can be interpreted and portrayed as a dynamic success story of democracy, expressing sustainable development by demonstrating progress across a broad spectrum of dimensions (political and non-political). India classifies as a case with more modest increases. Pakistan may indicate potentials for a democracy increase (from a low level), there, however, the whole situation is more unclear and still fragile (confronted and challenged by possible set-backs).
3. **The Arab spring of 2010 and 2011:** On the aggregate scores of quality of democracy, all hot-spot Arab countries scored quite low on the eve of the Arab “democracy” revolutions.⁶ When referring to the scores for 2009-2010, the specific local ranking here is: Bahrain 41.6, Tunisia 37.7, Egypt 35.4, Syria 30.9, Libya 24.5, and Yemen 23.7. On the economy dimension, Bahrain ranks first (among the Arab countries discussed here), Tunisia second and Libya third. When comparing 2006-2007 with 2009-2010, overall conditions modestly improved in Libya (+0.6), Egypt (+0.5), Tunisia (+0.3), but decreased in Syria (-0.2), Bahrain (-0.5) and Yemen (-0.5). This demonstrates how the pre-revolution conditions differed in these specific Arab countries. There can be a revolution with or without a general decline trend of society in advance. Authoritarian or totalitarian regimes may fall down, irrespective of their degree of being totalitarian. However, it should be emphasized that all Arab countries listed here are rated by

⁶) In the near future or coming years we will see, how democratic or undemocratic the political outcome of the “Arab spring” will be in these countries. There is a whole spectrum of possibilities.

Freedom House as “not free”, so all reported scores represent only “virtual scores”. Therefore, we may experience some explanatory limitations of the applied model and conceptual formula of the Democracy Ranking.

- Possible ramifications of the current financial and economic crisis for the state of democracy and the quality of democracy in the world:** So far, so our proposition, we should assert that there has been a general improvement of democracy and an increase of the quality of democracy in the world in the second half of the 2000s. On a global scale, we cannot identify and measure (with scientific tools) a crisis of democracy. Particularly in several of the world regions, such as South America, South Asia and South-East Asia, several of the newly industrialized countries and emerging economies demonstrate impressive improvements in the overall quality of their democracies. Should the current financial and economic crisis in the advanced economies of the OECD countries prevail, could this have, in mid-term perspective, a negative influence, backlash and impact on the further near-future global prospects of democracy? Such a scenario, of course, cannot be ruled out. The spreading of the economic problems from the OECD countries to the emerging markets in non-OECD countries could in fact constrain the democratic progress and opportunities there. It remains to be seen, whether the new democracies in the newly emerging markets can close (at least by tendency) the democracy gap to the established democracies in the advanced democracies.

3. Country-specific (region-specific) statements

Concerning the quality of democracy and the development of democracy in Europe, the United States, Russia, and China, we want to formulate the following propositions:

- The top 10 countries of the Democracy Ranking 2011 – the Nordic democracies and Switzerland as a global benchmark for the quality of democracy in the world:** The top ten countries are – in the sequence of their ranking for 2009-2010: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Denmark, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, and the United Kingdom. These are also the same ten countries as in 2006-2007, however, with a modest internal reshuffling of their internal rankings (Sweden and the United Kingdom lost ranks). *This illustrates the globally leading positioning of European democracies (within our outside of the EU) with regard to the quality of democracy in the world. European democracies still express here a crucial saliency. The Nordic democracies (and Switzerland) demonstrate in empirical terms and in practice, which degrees and levels of a quality of democracy already can be achieved at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Nordic model of quality of democracy is being carried and supported by a strong momentum of sustainable development, implying progress and good performance across a broad spectrum of different dimensions (political and non-political). This stabilizes progress in the Nordic context.* Furthermore, it appears necessary to emphasize that the integration project of the European Union should also be understood as a “democracy project”. European democracy “challenges” the American democracy, and the European dream is also a dream of democracy.⁷ *What, however, is just as (if not even) more important in a mid-term perspective and in the long run, is, what European democracy and American democracy can learn from each other? Global mutual learning in democracy and the*

⁷) See also: Rifkin, Jeremy (2004). *The European Dream: How Europe’s Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

quality of democracy should be given a higher priority, and here attributes of a Global Democracy are coming positively together with reinforcing effects.

2. **A down-sliding of the quality of democracy in some European democracies:** Several European democracies are confronted with a down-sliding in their quality of democracy, when comparing the years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. These are: Sweden (-0.3), Greece (-0.4), Bulgaria (-0.5), United Kingdom (-0.6), Lithuania (-0.8), France (-1.1), Italy (-1.1), Hungary (-1.1), and Latvia (-1.8). France, Italy, Hungary, and Lithuania also lost on the political dimension. For example: France on gender and in corruption; Italy on political rights, civil liberties, press freedom and corruption; Hungary on civil liberties, gender, press freedom and corruption; and Lithuania on civil liberties, gender, and press freedom. Also Sweden and the United Kingdom lost on the political dimension (Sweden in gender and corruption, the UK in civil liberties, freedom of press and corruption). *This clearly illustrates that setbacks in the quality of democracy are not limited (for example) to new democracies in Eastern-Central Europe, but refer also to some of the longer established and consolidated democracies in Western Europe, applying to the political dimension as well as the non-political dimensions. May this indicate a troublesome sign, challenging and endangering the global lead of European democracy?* This underscores that a further supporting and a further excelling of democracy and the quality of democracy represents not only an issue for democracies in the newly industrializing countries and emerging markets, but is also essential for advanced democracies with a very-high-quality. Democracy, therefore, should also be seen as a process in permanent flux, increases, but also decreases, of quality in democracy are always and everywhere possible. The supranational institutions of the EU should not undervalue the intrinsic surplus value of the “democratic mission”. *In some of the European countries, we may observe the coming-together of a double-crisis, where the financial and economic problems overlap with and are being amplified by a decrease in the quality of democracy.*
3. **Poland and Serbia:** Within the European Union, Poland represents the democracy with the highest improvement of its quality (+2.6). What is so impressive about Poland, is the circumstance that Poland advanced in the political dimension and, furthermore, progressed across all non-political dimension. *Poland, therefore, is a very robust and successful example of sustainable development and improvements in the quality of democracy.* On a global scale, Serbia is the European democracy with the highest increase of its quality of democracy (+4.7). Also Serbia gained on politics and across almost all non-political dimensions (with the only exception of the environment). *Paradoxically, these advances of Serbia, so far, were not sufficient to excel the current negotiation processes of Serbia for membership application to the European Union.*
4. **Austria:** In global comparison, Austria ranks at position 11 (in 2006-2007 and in 2009-2010), which is very high, but not among the top ten. Austria gained on all non-political dimensions, but lost on the political dimension, respectively on political rights and corruption. Referring to the non-political dimensions, Austria ranks higher on the economy and on health, not so high on gender and knowledge, and lower on the environment (for example, CO₂ emissions). For Austria, gender, knowledge and environmental protection, therefore, define crucial areas for a further improvement of the quality of its democracy. Corruption appears to be a “hot topic” for Austria, raising pressures to realize progress in that domain.

5. **United States:** The U.S. gained in total aggregate scores (+1.0), but not in ranking position, which was at 15 in 2006-2007 and still is in 2009-2010. By this, the U.S. ranks very high in global comparison, but there is still a gap to the Nordic democracies and Switzerland. In 2009-2010, the scores are for Norway 88.2, Sweden 87.2, Finland 85.8, Switzerland 85.2, Denmark 83.5, and the United States scores at 79.0. The U.S. gained on the political dimension and in several of the non-political dimensions, but lost in the economy and on gender equality. The United States, therefore, is being challenged to prevent a spill-over of the financial and economic crisis to the political spheres of its democracy and the quality of democracy.

6. **Russia and China:** Russia and China are being categorized by Freedom House as “not free”, so their scoring should be regarded only as a “virtual scoring”. In 2009-2010, the total scoring of Russia (44.1) is higher than the total scoring of China (36.7). Russia scores on all non-political dimensions higher than on politics. Also China scores on all of the non-political dimensions higher than on politics. While Russia’s scoring on politics decreased, it slightly improved for China. China as well as Russia progressed and improved across all non-political dimensions. The total scores of Russia are the same in 2006-2007 and 2009-2010, but advanced for China (+1.3). *This creates the developmental puzzle that the two non-democracies (or “unfree” democracies) of Russia and China, which cannot be regarded as free societies, achieved robust (and sustainable) growth across the whole spectrum of non-political dimensions. By this, could non-democracies turn into global economic world champions during the next few years? Could there be a scenario, where the financial and economic problems of the established OECD democracies are paralleled by economic success stories of non-democracies?* This demonstrates why further democratizations of Russia and China are so crucially important. Democratic progress as well as progress in the non-political dimensions in South America, South Asia and South-East Asia, of course, diversifies and supports our general assessment of the status of democracy and development in the world.