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Governance statistics in OECD countries and beyond: What exists, and what would be required to assess their quality?

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GOVERNANCE STATISTICS IN OECD COUNTRIES AND BEYOND: WHAT EXISTS, AND WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ASSESS THEIR QUALITY?

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

The paper provides a first assessment of the range of governance statistics that are available in OECD countries, reaching three main conclusions. First, while several statistics relating to various aspects of governance are already available, they differ in terms of the underlying concepts, the labels used to describe them, the range of institutions covered, and the detailed aspect or function considered: developing a common conceptual framework for governance is hence a prerequisite for gathering more robust and useful statistics in this field. Second, efforts should be devoted to thoroughly assess the quality of existing governance statistics, as a preliminary step towards providing general advice to statistical producers and users: the model currently used by the OECD with respect to measuring "trust", based on an assessment of the reliability and validity of existing measures, could be usefully extended to other aspects of governance. Third, while politically sensitive, there are no *a priori* reasons why NSOs should consider governance statistics as falling outside their remit; these statistics should become part of their routine production, subject to the same quality standards and requirements that apply to other social, economic and environmental statistics.

Keywords: governance, public institutions, quality of democracy, rule of law, trust, satisfaction with services, methodology for collecting and organising microeconomic data, well-being

JEL Classification: C46, H11, H83, I31

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On trouvera dans le présent document une première évaluation de l'éventail des statistiques disponibles au sein des pays de l'OCDE dans le domaine de la gouvernance. Trois grandes conclusions s'en dégagent. Premièrement, si plusieurs statistiques relatives à divers aspects de la gouvernance sont déjà disponibles, elles diffèrent sur le plan de leurs concepts sous-jacents, des appellations employées pour les décrire, de la gamme d'institutions couvertes et des aspects précis pris en compte : l'élaboration d'un cadre conceptuel commun en matière de gouvernance apparaît donc comme une condition préalable pour rassembler des statistiques plus robustes et utiles dans ce domaine. Deuxièmement, il faudrait s'employer à évaluer de façon exhaustive la qualité des statistiques existantes en matière de gouvernance, afin de pouvoir ensuite fournir des conseils d'ordre général aux producteurs et aux utilisateurs de statistiques ; le modèle actuellement utilisé par l'OCDE s'agissant de mesurer la confiance, à la lumière d'une évaluation de la fiabilité et de la validité des éléments de mesure existants, pourrait utilement être étendu à d'autres aspects de la gouvernance. Troisièmement, même si cette question est politiquement sensible, il n'y a aucune raison, *a priori*, pour que les offices statistiques nationaux n'intègrent pas les statistiques de gouvernance à leur production courante, avec les mêmes exigences et normes de qualité que pour les autres statistiques d'ordre social, économique ou environnemental.

Mots-clés : gouvernance, institutions publiques, qualité de la démocratie, état de droit, confiance, satisfaction des usagers des services publics, méthodologie pour la collecte et l'organisation des données micro-économiques, bien-être

Classification JEL : C46, H11, H83, I31

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1. Introduction[2]

1. The notion of "governance" is both broad and complex: it has been applied in a variety of contexts, encompassing both technical and substantive aspects. The term is now embedded in the political lexicon of most countries, and figures prominently in national and international statistical agendas. Interest in this area by the statistical community is, however, fairly recent and has been partly prompted by the inclusion of a governance goal (Goal 16) in the UN 2030 Agenda.[3] A concrete manifestation of this interest has been the creation of a UN City Group on Governance Statistics (the Praia Group) in March 2015. This paper takes stock of the statistical measures available in OECD countries, and presents some examples of the type of analysis that would be required to assess the reliability and validity of measures on various aspects of governance. In so doing, the paper highlights some of the key challenges to further progress on the statistical agenda in this area.

2. This paper adopts a narrow definition of governance, focusing on public institutions (i.e. excluding corporations and other private institutions) operating at the national level (i.e. excluding international or local institutions). As a first step towards reaching consensus on a conceptual framework that could be operationalised by official statistics, the paper suggests that the various aspects typically associated with the concept of governance could be grouped under three broad domains: *i*) the high-level *principles* governing the operations of these institutions; *ii*) the *processes* through which decisions in these institutions are made; and *iii*) the *outcomes* that these institutions deliver to people. These domains include more specific dimensions and aspects within them discussed in later sections

3. The paper reviews the various types of data on governance that are available in OECD countries. In contrast to other world regions[4], official statistics on governance are only rarely produced by statistical offices in most OECD countries. However, various measures on governance are currently generated through a range of sources such as administrative data, expert assessments provided by researchers and civil servants, and household surveys conducted by private organisations. In most cases statistics from a variety of sources will need to be brought together to provide comprehensive information on key aspects of governance. This paper considers a range of sources providing governance data for several countries, and assesses the extent to which they provide consistent information on the performance of various OECD countries with respect to a selected number of governance aspects.

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[2] This paper is the result of a joint collaboration between the OECD Statistics Directorate and the OECD Directorate on Public Governance and Territorial Development. Parts of this paper were produced in the context of a review of governance statistics undertaken by the OECD, INEGI and TURKSTAT for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The paper also integrates empirical analysis that was not included in the CES review, while omitting sections of that review prepared by other agencies. The review of governance statistics prepared by TURKSTAT, OECD and INEGI was discussed by the CES Bureau at its meeting in Ottawa, Canada, on 11-12 October 2016.

[3] Goal 16 is about "Promot(ing) peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". While around 20 indicators for global monitoring of Goal 16 have been agreed upon by the Inter Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (IEAG), around 1/3 of them are currently classified as Tier III, i.e. indicators lacking an established methodology and standards and no regular collections.

[4] Over 20 statistical offices in Asia, Africa and Latin America are already actively producing governance statistics. Since 2012, several African countries have been conducting pilot surveys on "Governance, Peace and Security" in the context of the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHASA), supported by UNDP and the African Union. These pilots aim, inter alia, to inform the African Union's "Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance", signed by 45 countries in the region.

4. The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the concept of governance and describes a range of measurement initiatives in this field. Section 3 presents the conceptual framework used in this paper to group the many aspects of governance into three domains. Section 4 describes the statistical activities on governance undertaken in OECD countries, with a special focus on those that provide cross-country information, i.e. those gathered through expert assessments and (non-official) household surveys. Section 5 shows some evidence on the reliability and validity of these measures for selected aspects of governance, while Section 6 concludes.

2. Setting the scene

5. The concept of "governance", rooted in the Latin word for steering a boat, has been used in many contexts by different actors and institutions. Since the 1990s, the term has been increasingly associated with policies aimed at creating institutions conducive to higher economic growth and development (Rothstein, 2013), i.e. "good governance", and with the diffusion of new management models.[5]

6. Much of these modern uses of governance were driven by concerns about the experiences of European countries transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democracies in the 1990s, and of developing countries with weak institutional capacities after colonisation. For example, the donor community has increasingly advocated basing foreign aid on information on how efficiently and effectively recipient governments use the resources they received, and specific development programmes have been targeted to improve democratic governance in poor countries. Additionally, good governance has been regarded as essential for assessing the investment-climate and orienting investment choices (UN, 2007). Governance indicators have been used by investors, donors and financial institutions to evaluate the stability and transparency of governments as well as the ease of conducting business affairs in different countries (Oman and Arndt, 2006). However, this broad notion of governance has also been contested as disregarding the specificities of different institutional contexts, especially in the developing world (Plattner, 2013).

7. Wilde (2011) distinguishes between three phases in the evolution of governance statistics. A first wave, from the 1970s until the fall of the Berlin's wall, relied mainly on indicators of democracy and politics developed by academics and civil society organisations (e.g. Freedom House, State of Freedom in the World). A second wave, from the early 1990s to the late-2000s, relied on quantitative, multi-country rankings and composite indicators, developed by donors and often used to allocate financial resources (e.g. the World Bank "World Governance Indicators"). The third wave, which is still ongoing, corresponds to assessments based on bottom-up, citizen-initiated approaches emphasizing dialogue, accountability, and national ownership of development programmes and capacity development (e.g. the Urban Development Index supported by the UN-HABITAT programme). Across the different waves, all agencies active in the field of governance indicators have faced two critical challenges: a "legitimacy" challenge, i.e. who is doing the measurement and funding the research; and a "contextual relevance" challenge, i.e. the need for indicators and measurement approaches adapted to different institutional and cultural contexts.

8. Today's demand for robust governance indicators is, however, not limited to developing and emerging countries, or to foreign investors' concerns. It is strong in "old democracies" as in new ones, and it relates to an increasing dissatisfaction by ordinary people with how democracy works. Whether policy

[5] These new management models emphasise the importance of horizontal organisations (rather than vertical ones), decentralisation (rather than centralisation), democratic participation (rather than rules based on authority), openness and transparency (rather than secrecy), relations based on trust (rather than arm-length relations), involvement of stakeholders (rather than limiting decision to shareholders and directors) and legitimacy (rather than legality).

decisions are responsive to the needs and rights of people, and whether growing economic inequalities are limiting equality in front of the law and in the political system, are essential questions confronting countries around the world. How political and government institutions function matters for people's political voice and agency, and is a vital element of people's overall well-being (Stiglitz et al., 2009).[6]

9. The demand for governance indicators has also developed in a context where the prerogatives of the state – as the main actor responsible for the implementation of public policies – have been challenged, weakened or replaced (Offe, 2009). At the international level, financing institutions have often referred to "governance" as part of a drive to reduce the scope of state activities (Smouts, 1998), while at the domestic level, the emergence of alternative delivery mechanisms (e.g. public private partnerships) and looser networks of organizations – including civil society, trade unions, business organizations and private companies – has multiplied the interactions of various actors with public institutions (Pierre, 2000). While the delegation of government functions to non-state actors has often been justified by the need to achieve greater effectiveness in service delivery (i.e. higher value-for-money), it has also created problems for accountability (e.g. where does public interest end and private ones begin?), leading to conflicts of interest between the elected "principal" and the private "agent" executing the various tasks (Fukuyama, 2014).[7]

10. There are many international indicator sets focusing on governance. Some of them are quite comprehensive – such as the World Bank's "World Governance Indicators" (WGI) or Bertelsmann's "Sustainable Governance Indicators" (SGI) – while others focus on selected aspects of governance – such as the "Rule of Law Index" (RoL) produced by the World Justice Project, or Transparency International's "Corruption Index" – or on a limited set of government services – such as the World Bank's "Doing Business" indicators. Some sets collate information from many different sources, while others build on data exclusively or primarily collected by the sponsoring organisation; some rank countries based on their performance through a single composite index while others rely on scoreboards of indicators. Only rarely, if at all, are these indicators based on data provided by official statistics.

11. Governance statistics are still lacking a solid foundation within the official statistical system. No international standards or guidelines exist that could guide data collections in this field. Lack of common agreement about what exactly should be measured is surely the main problem: without clarity on what the concept of governance is, and about its constituent elements, its statistical operationalization risks becoming a futile exercise. But even when the focus is narrowed down to specific aspects of a broader concept, very little systematic research on the quality of various measures exists, i.e. whether the concept measured by statisticians maps onto identifiable constructs for survey respondents, whether different measures of the same concept provide consistent information, and whether these measures align with

[6] In this vein, the OECD identifies "civic engagement and governance" as one of the 11 dimensions of people's current well-being (OECD, 2013b), and relies on a few selected indicators (on trust in institutions, voter turnout, participation in political activities, stakeholders' engagement in the process of developing government regulations) to benchmark countries' performance in this field. Measures of people's trust in others are also used by the OECD to monitor "social capital", one of the key resources sustaining future well-being (OECD, 2015).

[7] In this context, the term governance has also expanded its reach to a wide variety of areas such as "global governance" (to describe interactions between various states or regions, and the global institutions supporting these interactions), "network governance" (to describe interactions between the diverse organisations contributing to achieve a given goal), and governance of specific institutions (such as corporations and non-government organisations).

common understanding of their causes and consequences. Evidence bearing on these questions is provided in Section 5 of this paper.[8]

3. Scope and definition of governance statistics

Governance as multidimensional concept

12. There is not a single definition of "governance" (Box 1). Researchers from many disciplines and international organizations have used it as an umbrella term encompassing a plethora of very different concepts such as democratization, rule of law, effectiveness of public policies, anti-corruption, respect for human rights and freedoms, administrative procedures, civil society participation, regulatory quality, etc. But these definitions, by themselves, do not pass the test of clearly identifying what falls within, and what is outside, the boundaries of governance statistics.

Box 1. Governance definitions used by international organisations

Most international organisations have proposed definitions of "governance". While these definitions have much in common, they also have important differences.

- The OECD refers to governance as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation's affairs" (OECD, 2013a).
- The World Bank refers to governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised" (Kauffman, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010).
- The UNDP refers to governance as "the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector" (UNDP, 2000).
- The EU refers to governance as "the rules, process and behaviours that affect the way in which powers are exercised (at the European level), in particular as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence" (EC, 2003).
- The UN refers to governance as "the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and how public actions are carried out from the perspective of maintaining a country's constitutional values" (UN, 2007).
- Finally, the Commission on Global Governance used the term to describe the "sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, private and public, manage their common affairs... a continuing process through which conflicting and diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest" (CGG, 1995).

13. Political scientists have also identified diverse requirements of "good governance" ranging from narrower notions of "impartiality" (a requirement that is independent of the actual content of policies, Rothstein and Teorell, 2008) and "effectiveness" of government decisions (Rotberg, 2014) to broader

[8] There are indications that some National Statistical Offices are acknowledging the importance of governance measures. Following a public consultation on its "Measures of Australia's Progress" in 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics identified "governance" as a separate pillar of its statistical activities, on par with economic, social and environmental statistics. Other statistical offices, such INEGI in Mexico, have undertaken large investments to enhance their ability to measure the functioning of the judicial system, and of people's access to various public services and institutions.

notions of "state capacity, bureaucratic autonomy, quality of administrative procedures" (Holt and Manning, 2014) and of "state building, rule of law, accountability" (Fukuyama, 2014), to longer lists of specific ingredients of good governance such as "(due) process, reconciliation, gathering actors, permanent interactivity" (Smouts, 1998) and democratic qualities such as "freedoms, rule of law, vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, responsiveness, equality, participation, competition" (Diamond and Morlino, 2004). This lack of agreement about the definition of governance and its key ingredients entails significant challenges for measurement.

Deconstructing the concept of governance

14. Operationalising complex concepts such as governance requires two fundamental decisions: first, setting the boundaries of what should be included and excluded within the remit of governance statistics; secondly, using a framework to describe what falls within the boundary of the concept being analysed.

15. With respect to the first task, the choice made in this paper is to restrict the reach of governance to public institutions serving the common good of a community. This implies neglecting private institutions (i.e. the internal organisation of corporate firms, and the rules and obligations on their actions posed by laws and regulations) even when they have important bearings on the welfare of large communities. As most public institutions have their roots in national states, this paper further restricts attention to national institutions, i.e. excluding international or supranational ones. Even so, the field of enquiry remains vast, as national public institutions operate at different geographical levels (i.e. federal, state and sub-national levels) and in separate branches of government (i.e. executive, legislative and judiciary braches).

16. Public institutions have been considered, at the most abstract level, as guarantors of the rights and well-being of the people being governed by these institutions. This perspective follows a long tradition that defines the "key task of governments (as) to secure people the most central entitlements" (Nussbaum, 2011). These entitlements are shaped by the quality of decision-making processes and include the existence and transparency of the electoral process, access to information, the maintenance of civil and political rights, the existence of limits expressed by the law to the decisions made by public institutions and to the process of selecting, monitoring and replacing governments. While citizens' rights and institutional constraints are specific to each country and period, all public institutions (whether operating in established democracies or in authoritarian regimes) owe their legitimacy to the presumption that they are acting to secure the constitutional entitlements of those being governed.

17. The second task is to develop a framework apt to describe what the institutions falling within the remit of governance actually do. At a general level, public institutions are expected to *make and implement decisions* conducive to economic development and societal well-being *in an effective and competent way*. For example, Fukuyama (2013) defines public governance as a "government's ability to make and enforce rules and deliver services" as reflected in the administrative procedures, state capacity and bureaucratic autonomy of various public institutions. This and other approaches imply that some practices will lead to better government performance, and that improving these processes and enhancing the competences of the staff administering them are fundamental aspects of good governance.

18. However, creating an institutional machinery working properly and effectively cannot be the objective of governance *per se*. Public institutions should deliver outcomes that are valued (i.e. recognised as important) by people, and these outcomes should improve people's lives.[9] Rotberg (2014), for example,

[9] An early formulation of what institutions provide to their subjects was given by Adam Smith (1772), who distinguished between three functions of sovereigns, i.e. "protecting society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies", "establishing an exact administration of justice (among every member of

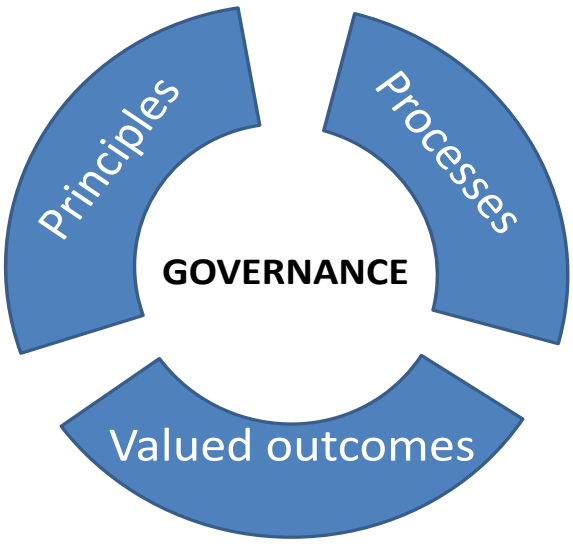
argues that good governance is best measured by looking at government results, interpreted as service delivery outputs and outcomes. Similarly, Ringen (2007) argues that "the way citizens experience delivery is in confidence, safety and trust: confidence in government, safety in the security of rights and liberties, trust in an order that enables people to trust each other". Additional measures that have a direct effect on people's lives are the quality of services delivered, the capacity to make choices and to express freely one's views and preferences, lack of discrimination and effective equality before the law.

19. In light of these various theoretical perspectives, the three domains used in this paper to classify the various aspects of governance (i.e. the second task mentioned above) are:

- the high-level *principles* governing the functioning of various public institutions, which are critical for establishing the legitimacy of the decisions taken;
- the *processes* through which decisions are taken and implemented, which are important for the capacity of public institutions to undertake a given function; and
- the *outcomes* delivered by these institutions that are *valued as important* by all members of a community.

20. The three domains shown in Figure 1 are not fully independent of each other: typically, "principles" frame "processes", which in turn influence "outcomes". But each of them captures facets of governance that are conceptually different, and whose measurement requires specific tools (OECD, 2017a). Furthermore, while specific actors are better placed to generate statistics on some specifics domains (e.g. civil servants in the case of about government processes), different measurement tools (e.g. household surveys and expert assessment) have been used to provide evidence on all these domains.

Figure 1. Conceptual domains of governance



society)" and "maintaining those public institutions and public works which, though... advantageous to a great society are... of such a nature that (they) cannot be expected that any individual or small number of individuals should erect or maintain".

21. Table 1 further details this conceptual framework by identifying the types of questions that each of the three domains is addressing, the functions that they perform, and the units of analysis that are most relevant for measuring them. The table also gives examples of some of the more detailed aspects within the three domains, drawing upon the terms typically used in the public governance literature. While the list of aspects is not exhaustive, it illustrates most of the items discussed in this paper. In the table below, each aspect has been assigned to a specific domain; however, in some cases, boundaries are blurred and some aspects could sensibly be assigned to more than one domain.

Table 1. Deconstructing the concept of governance

Domain	Question	Functions	Unit of analysis	Aspects
Principles	What is expected from public institutions?	Frame their actions under shared societal values such as safeguarding freedom, maintaining peace and security and respecting the democratic process	Public institutions and agencies	• Quality of democracy • Rule of law • Democratic preferences
Processes	How do public institutions perform their role?	Making and implementing decisions that are needed for the appropriate regulation of economic and social life	Public institutions and agencies	• Administrative procedures • State capacity • Bureaucratic autonomy • Regulatory quality • Accountability • Openness • Civic engagement • Non-discrimination • Cost effectiveness • Absence of corruption
Valued Outcomes	Why it is important?	Deliver services that improve the lives of people	People and citizens	• Political efficacy • Trust in institutions • Satisfaction with services delivered

4. Types of governance statistics

Overview of measurement approaches

22. Each of the three domains identified in Section 3 calls for a different measurement approach, tailored to the underlying phenomena to be captured. In particular:

- Principles governing the functioning of various public institutions reflect the political and philosophical ideals of each society. Even within a concept broadly embraced such as democracy, several institutional set-ups may produce good outcomes, with notions on "ideal" democracy varying across countries and periods. Most discussions about the types and quality of democracy integrate several dimensions, as in the case of collaborative projects such as "Varieties of Democracy", Polity2, the World Justice Project, etc. All of these projects focus on the state and public institutions of each country, and assess countries' performance based on the views of experts. While some aspects of democracy (e.g. rights to elect and be elected) could be captured through household surveys, public servants are generally not well placed to rate political institutions as they could face conflicts of interests when assessing the system they are serving in.

- Processes can be measured through indicators of how public institutions function. In most cases, this assessment will require technical knowledge about the rules and operations of various parts of the governance machinery. Moreover, the purpose of measurement in this case is to evaluate

the process by which public institutions transform resources into outputs (e.g. goods and services) delivered to citizens. Evidence on these processes help governments to improve their practices and to use their resources in a more efficient and effective way. In order to measure this domain of governance, civil servants are typically well placed to provide the information needed based on administrative sources. Some comparative information in this area is currently collected by international organizations, as in the case of the OECD "Government at a Glance" series. However, in some instances (e.g. fight against corruption), processes could also be assessed through household surveys or a combination of household surveys and expert assessment.

- Finally, in the case of outcomes, people are the preferred unit of observation, as they can best judge how public institutions affect their lives and shape their destinies. NSOs and other (non-official) producers of household-level surveys are ideally placed to measure outcomes in ways that that could be compared across countries, periods and demographic groups.

23. A broad-brushed inventory of comparative evidence on governance, available in OECD countries, is presented below. This inventory first presents some of the best known international datasets compiled by international organizations, followed by a non-exhaustive inventory of governance data produced by expert assessments and non-official household surveys.

International organisations

24. There are many international datasets on public governance, some of them compiled by intergovernmental organisations. Data collection initiatives on governance undertaken by intergovernmental organisations with large international coverage include the following:[10]

- The European Union Commission collects some governance statistics through a range of vehicles: For example, the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) include questions on trust in public institutions and satisfaction with services. Similar questions, plus additional governance topics like corruption, are included in the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), conducted by Eurofound, and the European Quality of Government survey, funded by the EU Commission for Regional Development (REGIO).

- The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) assists the United Nations Secretariat and UN agencies and programmes with democracy-building initiatives. As part of its work, IDEA gathers comparative knowledge on electoral institutions and processes. One of the organisation's most widely used statistics is voter turnout, which IDEA computes based on data from electoral management bodies.

- The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) provide a comprehensive cross-country dataset, with composite indicators for six dimensions of governance: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; corruption and transparency. These indicators are based on hundreds of variables obtained from 31 different data sources ranging from household surveys to data provided by non-governmental organizations, commercial providers of statistics, and public sector organizations.[11]

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[10] Statistics produced by the OECD through its *Government at a Glance* series are described below.

[11] The Word Bank also compiles data set on regulatory quality through its "Doing Business" indicators.

25. Most of these projects do not follow a well-defined measurement framework. Also, while some of them are quite comprehensive (e.g. the World Bank's World Governance Indicators), others focus on specific governance aspects (e.g. the voter turnout data of IDEA). Similarly, while some datasets collate information from many different sources, others build on data submitted by government officials or compiled of household survey data. Several of these sets rank countries according to their performance based on a single composite score but most rely on scoreboards. In general, most of the activities undertaken by international agencies in the field of governance involve collecting existing data or generating indicators of governance performance.

Expert assessments

26. Expert assessments of various aspects of governance are undertaken in both OECD and some developing countries by research networks, think-tanks, and international organisations. Experts are typically professionals working in this area (e.g. lawyers, researchers, academics, etc.) or high-level civil servants with a good knowledge of and reputation on the issues at stake. Commonly, measures based on expert assessment are presented as composite indicators comprising several sub-components that can be analysed independently. In most cases, experts are required to combine expertise on the subject matter with detailed knowledge of the country assessed. In all projects reviewed here, the institution responsible for publishing the indicators assess the information provided by experts and is responsible for adjusting and validating the resulting measures

27. Several reasons exist for relying on experts as source of information on governance. First, for certain aspects of governance, experts are best placed to provide the information required (e.g. detailed information about budgeting or procurement that may not be available from other sources) and to make informed judgements (e.g. on whether elections are fair). Second, indicators based on expert assessment can be more easily used for cross-country comparisons than the data independently collected by various administrative agencies, as they are based on a common reporting template. Third, indicators developed through expert assessment are typically less costly to collect, especially when compared to data collected through household surveys (Kauffman and Kraay, 2007). Conversely, drawbacks of data drawn from expert assessments are that little information may be available about the criteria used for selecting experts, the standards guiding their assessment (leading to results that can change depending on the expert being interviewed), and differences between the views of experts and those of ordinary people on the same phenomena. More generally, questions remain about the capacity of expert assessments to describe the concept under study, and the extent to which these measures are consistent with those generated by other experts and through other sources (e.g. household surveys or administrative data). A key concern by users is whether indicators based on expert assessment are valid and reliable, which requires empirical analysis.[12]

28. Expert assessment indicators are typically based on two types of respondents: *i*) academics and researchers; and *ii*) government officials. Each of these groups of respondents may provide different perspectives on the issues at hand. Because experts are well placed to assess detailed aspects of governance, summary information across these aspects is often presented through composite indicators, with single scores used to rank countries on a specific aspect, or to shed light on the performance of a country in the broad area of governance, democracy or political systems. In terms of their content:

[12] For example, Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2010) compared data on perceived corruption from expert assessments and household surveys in eight Sub-Saharan countries, concluding that expert assessments overestimate corruption, as their views are biased by ideology or by their perception of the general economic condition of the country. Conversely, a similar analysis by Charron (2015), using household survey data covering 24 European countries, concluded that measures of the prevalence of corruption from household surveys and from expert assessments are highly correlated with each other.

- At the most aggregated level, assessments by researchers typically refer to governance "principles" (e.g. adherence to democratic principles) and, more rarely, to government "processes" (e.g. presence of corruption, openness and transparency of government operations); in some cases, however, experts may also provide information about the "outcomes" that various agencies deliver (e.g. people's access to the justice system, or whether it performs its functions effectively). Furthermore, in some cases the indicators produced by the sponsoring organisation may combine expert assessments and survey data, with the two measures usually weighted equally.[13] Measures based on the assessment of academics and researchers could also reflect the specific agenda of the sponsoring organisation, implying that scrutiny is needed to understand the motivations of data producers.

- Conversely, government officials are typically best placed to provide informed answers about detailed aspects of the functioning of government institutions (i.e. "processes"). Answers from designated government officials may also have a claim to represent the "official" position of the government on the phenomenon of interest. Public officials can report on the processes followed by public agencies but they may also experience conflicts of interests when evaluating the performance of government, because of incentives to present their country better than it actually is. Biases can also occur as government officials may interpret the same question differently, calling for additional methodological checks. Finally, even when indicators based on assessments by government officials are presented as composites, these tend to be narrowly defined and used to describe specific aspects of how government works in a specific area.

29. Key features of the expert assessments considered here are provided in Table 2. While differing in a variety of features, the projects reviewed are representatives of the assessments available in this field.

- The *Varieties of Democracy* (V-Dem) project, led by the Kellog institute (University of Indiana) and the University of Gothenburg, has developed a comprehensive dataset of democracy and political system in various countries. While the concept of democracy differs from that of governance, in practice most of the aspects covered by V-Dem are relevant for any assessment of governance. At its most aggregate level, V-Dem produces seven composite indicators measuring the most important types of democracy according to political theory: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian. To construct these measures, the project relies on country experts who answer a detailed questionnaire and code several variables, therefore providing subjective ratings of latent characteristics of democracy. On average, five experts per country, working independently, answer the same questionnaire. The project has regional managers and country coordinators in charge of deciding the list of experts (typically through a system of referrals).[14] The project uses a calibrating method (based on item response theory) to account for differences in how experts apply ordinal scales and for differences in raters' reliability (i.e. random error), which allows to assign weighs based on the integrated assessment of different respondents. The V-Dem dataset currently covers

[13] Combining several sources to produce an indicator can reduce the impact of the biases affecting each source but it also implies, in practice, that a greater weight is attributed to the views of an expert relative to those of a person participating in a survey.

[14] The regional manager is commonly an academic with high reputation, while experts are academics with expertise on a specific country and on the subject of democracy. Experts are selected based on biographical sketches, publications, website information, current location, education, current position and area of expertise. Five core criteria are considered when recruiting these experts: *i*) expertise in the country and topic; *ii*) connection to the country coded; *iii*) willingness to devote time and perform the task carefully; *iv*) impartiality; and *v*) diversity of background.

206 sovereign and semi sovereign political units, with indicators that have been extended back to 1900 by historians.

- *Bertelsmann Sustainable Governance Indicators* are produced by the Bertelsmann Foundation[15] for 41 OECD and EU countries, with the objective of assessing the viability of countries' governance systems. At its highest level, the Sustainable Governance Indicators consist of three composite indicators: *i*) a policy performance index; *ii*) a democracy index; and *iii*) a governance index. The policy and governance indexes combine quantitative data (mainly extracted from OECD and EU sources) with qualitative indicators, while the democracy index is based purely on information provided by experts. Each country is evaluated through a questionnaire sent to a minimum of two country-experts (academics or practitioners with relevant qualifications) covering a wide range of areas including budgetary policy, labour market policy and the electoral process); a regional coordinator (a staff of the foundation) completes the country-questionnaire.[16] In order to construct the indexes, all scores are standardized through a linear transformation, and then aggregated through a simple additive weighting process.
- The *World Justice Project* (WJP) is an independent, non-profit, multidisciplinary organisation (started under the sponsorship of the American Bar Association) that "seeks to increase public awareness about the foundational importance of the rule of law, stimulate policy reforms, and develop practical on-the-ground programs that enhance and extend the rule of law". Their main product is the Rule of Law (RoL) index, currently covering 102 countries, which assesses the situation of rule of law in each country based on eight criteria: *i*) constraints on government powers; *ii*) absence of corruption; *iii*) open government; *iv*) fundamental rights; *v*) order and security; *vi*) regulatory enforcement; *vii*) civil justice; and *viii*) criminal justice. A specific index is created for each criterion. The questionnaire sent to experts focuses on perceptions but also includes items based on hypothetical scenarios. Indicators are constructed by combining data from household surveys (based on 1 000 respondents in the three largest cities of each country) and an average of 25 experts per country.[17] Scores from household surveys and experts are aggregated, most commonly with equal weights[18], and then normalised.[19]

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15 Bertelsmann Foundation is a German private foundation founded by a philanthropist; among its goals are to contribute to social reform and "ensuring the continuity of Germany's political and social structures".

16 The questionnaire is completed by a first expert and then reviewed by a second expert (who also provides his own score); their assessments are then combined by the regional coordinator who establishes a country score; this is followed by an inter-regional meeting where different regional coordinators discuss assessment criteria and calibrate results; finally, the SGI board evaluates and approves the final results.

17 Experts are, ideally, professionals with expertise in civil and commercial law, criminal justice, labour law and public health, who interact regularly with state institutions and could provide information about the efficacy of courts, strength of regulatory enforcement and reliability of accountability systems. The selection of experts is done through two methods. The first is a two-stage process; in the first stage, a large number of organizations (law firms, universities/colleges, research organizations and NGOs) are selected; in the second, a random sample of experts within selected organization is drawn and the questionnaire is sent to them. The second method builds on the WJP network of practitioners and academics, to whom the questionnaire is sent. Respondents are primarily law professors and practicing attorneys selected from universities, law firms, research organizations and NGOs, as well as through referrals from practitioners

18 However, some subcomponents of the indexes (e.g. delay of administrative procedures and limitation of government powers by supreme audit institution) are based exclusively on expert assessments.

19 An external statistical audit of the WJP Rule of Law index conducted by the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) in 2014 concluded that the index is statistically coherent, with no dimension unduly dominated by

- Transparency International's[20] *Corruption Perception Index* aims at measuring perceived corruption in the public sector based on expert opinions. The index, currently available for 168 countries, relies on a wide array of external data sources aggregated using a simple average of all variables with re-scaled scores; no primary data are produced by Transparency International (TI). In order to be assigned a score, a country needs to have at least three data sources available, from which to calculate an average. According to TI, a source is deemed of acceptable quality for the construction of the index when data: *i*) are based on a reliable methodology from a credible institution; *ii*) address corruption in the public sector; *iii*) are granular (i.e. the scale used allows for sufficient differentiation); *iv*) are comparable across countries; and *v*) are available over several years.[21]
- *Freedom House*[22] *Civil Liberties and Political Rights Indices* are numerical ratings (supported by descriptive texts) for 195 countries and 15 territories. The indicators, which have been produced since 1972, rely on the assessment by analysts who perform on-ground research, consult local professionals, and collect and analyse information from news articles, NGOs, governments and other sources. There is only one analyst per country.[23] However, scores are based on a multi-layered process of analysis and evaluation by Freedom House staff.[24] Country-scores are presented as reflecting the consensus of analysts, advisers and Freedom House staff.

any component; and that country-ranks are robust to methodological changes related to the estimation of missing data, weighting or aggregation rule.

20 Transparency International is a voluntary association registered in Germany; its members are several country organisations and, in addition, a few individuals.

21 The CPI is considered in this section as most of the data used to compute the index rely on expert assessments.

22 Freedom House is an independent “watchdog organization” based in the United States and dedicated to the expansion of freedom and democracy around the world. The organization advocates “U.S leadership and collaboration with like-minded governments to oppose vigorously dictators and oppression”. The objective of this project is to assess the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world.

23 No information about the profile of analysts and the process for selecting them (or about whether the scores undergo changes during the process) is provided be Freedom House. Having only one analyst per country increases the risk and size of potential biases.

24 In this process, first, country analyst suggests numerical scores for the relevant components of the index; second, scores are reviewed in regional meetings by the analyst, regional experts and an in-house staff; third, a cross-regional evaluation is conducted to guarantee comparability and consistency in the scores.

Table 2. Characteristics of the expert assessments considered in this review

Name of the indicators/ database	Organisation responsible	Country coverage	Frequency	Inception	Number of experts	Background of experts	Dimensions of governance covered		
							Principles	Processes	Valued outcomes
Varieties of democracy	V-Dem institute / Kellog Institute (Indiana)/ University of Gothenburg	206 (sovereign/ semi-sovereign political units)	Yearly (data goes back to 1900)	2014	5 external experts per country; network of 2000 country experts	Academics	Quality of democracy; rule of law	Civil engagement; Absence of corruption	
Sustainable governance indicators	Bertelsmann Foundation	41 (OECD and EU countries)	2009, 2011, 2014 and 2015	2009	2 external experts per country	Academics	Quality of democracy; Good governance; Rule of law	Electoral process; Openness; Absence of corruption; Executive capacity (e.g. inter-ministerial coordination, societal consultation); Executive accountability	
Rule of law index	World Justice Project	102 countries	Yearly	2009	On average 25 external experts per country	Academics, practitioners (lawyers)	Quality of democracy	Absence of corruption; Open Government; Regulatory enforcement	Access to civil justice; Quality criminal justice
Civil liberty and political rights indices	Freedom House	202 sovereign and semi-sovereign political units	Yearly	1972	1 external expert per country	Country analysts	Quality of democracy		
Corruption perception index	Transparency International	168 countries	Yearly	1995 (changes in methodology limit comparability)	Aggregation of several external sources based on expert assessment	Academics/ practitioners/ country analysts		Public sector corruption (misuse of public resources)	
Government at a glance	OECD	34 countries plus 5-8 key partners	Bi-annually	2009	10-15 experts per country (1 expert per area)	Civil servants		Public procurement; Budgeting; Regulatory governance; Open government; Digital government; Public sector integrity; Human resource management practices	

30. Finally, the OECD report *Government at a Glance* relies on an indicator set published bi-annually since 2009, containing information on public institutions in OECD member and partner countries. This indicator set focuses on how governments perform from an internationally comparative perspective, and aims to: *i*) allow countries to benchmark their performance to other countries; *ii*) measure their own progress over time; *iii*) provide evidence to policy makers; and *iv*) allow countries to identify where further progress is needed or what problem areas need being addresses. The OECD publication is based on a dashboard of indicators pertaining to government inputs (e.g. public employment), activities (e.g. budgeting), outputs (e.g. access to education) and outcomes (e.g. income inequality), with information gathered through questionnaires addressed to country-representatives in Centre of Government offices.[25] The indicators in *Government at Glance* are constructed on the basis of several questionnaires sent to government officials with expertise in the relevant fields, implying that the *Government at Glance* indicators may be considered as reflecting the "official" view of government. Information provided by these government officials is reviewed by experts in the OECD Secretariat, and any discrepancies are brought to the attention of national governments. Assessments by government officials are commonly accompanied by fact-checking, to verify the accuracy of responses. This data validation processes takes place through different mechanisms.

- *Internal consistency:* questionnaires are designed in such a way that similar questions are included in different parts of the questionnaire; by contrasting different answers, consistency of responses can be verified. In addition, questionnaires incorporate filters to guide respondents through a specific survey-flow, based on answers that they provided previously.

- *External consistency:* whenever available, responses provided by experts are compared with other sources of information on the same concept. Within the questionnaires, experts are asked to provide evidence in the form of additional documents (e.g. laws, background documents) or examples on how public agencies are implementing the processes mentioned in their answers.

- *Consistency over time*: answers are compared with those from previous years. While assessments may change over time, changes need to be explained and documented.

- *Clear and concrete coding criteria*: efforts are made to provide clear coding criteria aimed at minimizing the subjectivity and degree of interpretation that is left to the coder.

- *Additional statistical methods***,** such as outlier detection, are used to assess data quality.

31. A small excerpt of the "Budget Practices and Procedures" questionnaire, used to develop indicators included in *Government at a Glance* is presented in Table 3 below.

[25] While *Government at a Glance* is not based on an explicit definition on what "good governance" is, principles are reflected in the choices of indicators presented, and in how those indicators are built.

Table 3. Example of the questionnaire used by the OECD for compiling Governance at a Glance indicators: budget practices and procedures

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

*** 1a. Where is the function of the Central Budget Authority (CBA) located in your government?**
Please select one.

- ☐ a. Ministry of Finance/Economy
- ☐ b. President's Office
- ☐ c. Prime Minister's Office
- ☐ d. Independent agency
- ☐ e. Other central government institution
- ☐ f. CBA is split between two or more Ministries/Agencies, please specify organisations and provide web links to each:

Additional comments:
Please use this space as needed to clarify your responses above.

*** 1b. If yes to 1a,b,c or e, please provide the formal name of the Central Budget Authority (CBA) organisation in your country along with a corresponding web link:**

*** 2. Please indicate whether the head of the CBA is:**
Please select one

- ☐ a. A senior civil servant (e.g. a government official who ordinarily remains in this position when there is a change in Government.)
- ☐ b. A political appointee (e.g. a person who generally does not remain in this position when there is a change in Government).
- ☐ c. Other, please specify:

Source: OECD, Government at a Glance questionnaire.

32. While all measures based on expert assessment may be considered as non-statistical indicators, they provide critical information on several aspects of government performance, and are used extensively in discussions on the subject. One general problem with indicators based on expert-assessment is that they lack a common definition of governance: as a result, indicators with similar labels (e.g. rule of law, democracy, corruption) may refer to slightly different concepts. Indicators based on expert assessment are also developed using different methodologies, which is reflected in the diversity of sources (e.g. experts only, or combinations of experts-assessment and survey data), the number and criteria used to select experts, the topics that experts are asked to assess, the type of aggregation and validation mechanisms used, as well as the country coverage of the measures.

Non-official household surveys

33. Household surveys represent another source of comparable data to assess a country's governance and the ways it affects people's lives. By asking citizens about their experiences, expectations and opinions on various aspects of government performance, household surveys provide information on governance from the perspective of the very people on behalf of whom public institutions are working.

34. While only few household surveys conducted by NSOs include questions on governance, there is significant experience in this field through non-official household surveys, some of which started to collect relevant information since the early 1980s (Table 4). Several limitations affect the quality of data from

non-official surveys: for example, most of these surveys have small sample sizes and low response rates, rely on inadequate sampling frames, and on minimal resources for survey development and cognitive testing (OECD, 2013b). But, despite these limits, non-official household surveys provide comparative experience and evidence on the type of questions that could be included in larger-scale official surveys.

35. Eight non-official household surveys that include questions on governance are reviewed here.[26] Some of these surveys include in-depth *ad hoc* modules dedicated to governance (e.g. Eurobarometer has featured special Barometers on corruption and discrimination in the past). However, only the core/repeated survey modules are considered here, as these allow monitoring changes over time[27].

36. Table 4 lists the main characteristics of these non-official surveys such as the year when the survey was first fielded, its frequency, survey-mode, and sampling frame. The table also describes the key aspects of governance covered by these surveys (which range from preferences about democracy, civic engagement, experience with corruption and service delivery to trust in public institutions), clustered under the three domains used in this review (i.e. "principles", "processes", and "outcomes"). Table 5 provides additional information on how each aspect is assessed and measured.[28] In terms of coverage of various governance aspects, two features stand out:

- First, although to a different extent, all three governance domains are covered by non-official surveys. Hence, *a priori*, household surveys could be used to measure all aspects of governance, either as a primary source of information (for those aspects where only people can provide relevant information) or alongside other measurement instruments.

- Second, survey questions have been used more extensively for some dimensions than for others. The non-officials surveys reviewed here only rarely probe respondents on principles (e.g. democratic preferences, quality of democracy), while questions are more common in the case of processes (e.g. non-discrimination, absence of corruption, civic engagement) and, in particular, of outcomes, where non-official surveys feature questions on political efficacy (e.g. interest in politics and political agency), trust in public institutions, and satisfaction with public services (e.g. health-care, education, transport). Thus, household surveys are particularly useful when considering how public institutions perform their role, and which outcomes are delivered.

37. As in the case of expert assessments, further work on the accuracy of the various survey measures of governance is needed to confirm their suitability to measure the concepts they aim to assess.

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26 These include surveys undertaken by academic networks (e.g. International Social Survey Programme, World Values Survey, European Social Survey) surveys initiated by commercial provides (e.g. Gallup World Poll), as well as surveys conducted by public institutions (e.g. Eurobarometer) or in response to a specific mandate from a public agency (e.g. the European Quality of Life Survey and the European Quality of Governance Survey).

27 For this reason, the ad hoc modules of EU-SILC have not been included in this section.

28 Assigning questions to a particular domain is, to some degree, subjective. Further, while the various questions broadly capture the same overall aspect, question wording and response scales may differ across surveys. Finally, many questions items are either not repeated in every wave or are asked in a slightly different manner. All these factors limit comparability across surveys and time.

Table 4. Non-official household surveys collecting comparable information on governance

Name of survey	Country coverage	Aspects of governance covered			Inception	Frequency	Modules	Sample size	Interview mode	Organisation responsible
		I. Principles	II. Processes	III. Valued Outcomes						
European Values Study	Total: 47 countries UNECE: 42 OECD: 26	Democratic preferences, quality of democracy	Civic engagement	Political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	1981	Every 9 years	Slightly adapted questionnaire each wave	1000 per country	Face-to-face	EVS Foundation
World Values Survey	Total: 97 countries UNECE: 42 OECD: 27	Democratic preferences, quality of democracy	Absence of corruption, civic engagement	Political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	1981	Every 5 years	Slightly changed core module in each wave	Minimum 1000 per country	Face-to-face	Global network of social scientists, Secretariat at the Institute for Comparative Survey Research, Austria
Eurobarometer	Total: 34 countries UNECE: 34 OECD: 25	Quality of democracy	Absence of corruption, civic engagement	Political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	1973	Every 6 months	Standard Barometer, plus Special Barometer, Flash Barometer and Qualitative Studies	1000 per country (except small countries)	Face-to-face	European Commission Directorate General for Communication
International Social Survey Programme	Total: 45 countries UNECE: 31 OECD: 31	Democratic preferences, quality of democracy	Absence of corruption, civic engagement, non-discrimination	Political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	1984	Annual	Rotating	Between 1000-3000 per country	Face-to-face	Global network of research organizations, Secretariat at GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany
European Social Survey	Total: 36 countries UNECE: 35 OECD: 27	Quality of democracy	Civic engagement, non-discrimination	Political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	2002	Every 2 years	Core, plus two rotating and one supplementary module	Minimum 1500 per country (800 in countries with less than 2 million inhabitants)	Experimenting with: face-to-face, telephone, Internet and paper self-completion	City University London
European Quality of Life Survey	Total: 33 countries UNECE: 32 OECD: 23		Civic engagement	Trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	2003	Every 4 years	Core, with new items and modules being added as the survey evolves	Between 1001-3055 per country	Face-to-face	Eurofund
Gallup World Poll	Total: 166 countries UNECE: 53 OECD: 34	Quality of democracy	Absence of corruption, civic engagement	Trust in institutions, satisfaction with services	2005	Annual	Core	1000 per country	Telephone (if penetration higher than 80%), face-to-face	Gallup Inc.
European Quality of Governance Survey	Total: 30 countries UNECE: 30 OECD: 23	Quality of democracy	Absence of corruption, non-discrimination	Satisfaction with services	2010	Every 3 years	Core	400 oe more per region, Europe-wide total 85 000	Telephone	University of Gothenburg, funded by EU Commission

Table 5. Dimensions and aspects of governance addressed by non-official household surveys

Domain	Question	Dimension	Description
Principles	What is expected from public institutions?	Democratic preferences	Attitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism
		Quality of democracy	Satisfaction with democracy Respect for human rights Freedom of the press Free and fair elections Privacy and government surveillance
Processes	How do public institutions perform their role?	Non-discrimination	Perception of fair and equal treatment by public officials and politicians
		Absence of corruption	Perception of corruption (in government and specific service sectors) Personal experience with corruption
		Civic engagement	Membership in political parties and labour unions Participation in political action (e.g. signing petitions, contacting officials, demonstrating)
Valued outcomes	Why it is important?	Political efficacy	Believes in personal agency in the political sphere
		Trust in institutions	Trust in a range of specific public institutions (e.g. parliament, government, courts, police, media) Approval of current leadership
		Satisfaction with services	Satisfaction with public services in a range of sectors (e.g. health, education, transport, police force)

5. Empirical evidence on the accuracy of available governance statistics

38. For measures of governance to be taken seriously, statistical quality is of essence. Unless data accurately capture the concept being measured there is not much interest in collecting it; this is especially the case for official statistics, which are expected to be of the highest quality. Nonetheless, most of the available measures on governance have not been evaluated following a rigorous statistical approach.

39. The *Quality Framework and Guidelines for OECD Statistical Activities* describe one approach to assessing statistical quality (OECD, 2008). This Framework defines quality as "fitness for use", i.e. the capacity of the available statistics to respond to users' needs. In this perspective, the ultimate benchmark of quality is whether statistics meet the needs of users by providing useful information. Because users must often make decisions about a course of action whether or not statistical information is available, it is important to focus on the "fitness for purpose" of measures rather than on whether the measure in question provides a perfect representation of the concept it intends to capture. This may involve accepting the use of data that is less than perfectly accurate, provided that the data are of sufficient quality to improve rather than detract from the quality of decision-making.

40. The OECD Framework identifies seven dimensions of statistical quality. These seven dimensions define the characteristics of high-quality data and provide a structured way of assessing the quality of a particular set of statistics. The seven dimensions of quality are: *i*) *relevance*, i.e. the degree to which data address the purposes for which they are sought by users; *ii*) *accuracy*, i.e. the degree to which data

correctly describe the quantities or characteristics they are designed to measure; *iii*) *credibility*, i.e. the confidence that users place in statistics based on the reputation of the data producer; *iv) timeliness*, i.e. the length of time between the availability of data and the phenomenon or event that the data describe; *v*) *accessibility*, i.e. how readily data can be located and retrieved by users; *vi*) *interpretability*, i.e. the ease with which users can understand and properly analyse the data; and *vii*) *coherence*, i.e. the degree to which data are consistent with similar measures and logically integrated into a system of statistics.

41. This section focuses on the accuracy of governance statistics. Accuracy is of crucial importance to any statistical measure: if a proposed measure does not correctly capture the underlying concept that it is intended to reflect, then it fails the basic test of providing useful information. Typically, accuracy is assessed by looking at the *reliability* of the measure, and at its *validity*. Reliability captures the degree to which a measure produces consistent information over time and across different measurement vehicles: a measure that produces different estimates of the same aspect when repeated is unreliable and inaccurate. Reliability is thus about the variance of the measure. Conversely, validity is concerned with the central tendency of the measure, rather than its variability, i.e. does the measure actually reflect the underlying concept to be measured?[29] Validity is usually assessed by looking at face validity (whether the measure makes sense intuitively), convergent validity (whether the measure correlates well with other proxy measures of the same concept), and construct validity (whether the measure behaves as suggested by theory and common sense). Where validity cannot be directly assessed[30], a measure can be considered valid if it performs well in terms of all three approaches outlined above.

42. Providing a comprehensive assessment of the accuracy of the governance data collected through the instruments described here is a goal that goes beyond the more limited remit of this paper. Some evidence on various facets of reliability and validity is, however, provided below for some selected governance aspects. This evidence highlights the type of empirical analysis that would be needed in order to recommend more comprehensive measurement approaches in this field.

Expert assessments

Evidence on the reliability of individual measures

43. Reliability can be assessed by checking whether expert-based indicators referring to the same phenomenon but deriving from different sources lead to similar conclusions. This is done here by looking at correlations between alternative expert-based measures of three aspects of governance, i.e. democracy, the rule of law, and public sector corruption. All measures have been normalized on a scale from 0 to 100.

44. In the case of democracy, three sets of indicators are analysed: those from the Bertelsmann's Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) components on the quality of democracy index; those from Freedom House's democracy indices (joint measure of civil rights and political liberties); and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) measures. The V-Dem project acknowledges the "highly abstract and contested nature of democracy", and develops seven different measures aimed at capturing the main principles and traditions associated with this concept, namely *electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory and egalitarian types* of democracy. For the other sources, the definitions of democracy are narrower. For

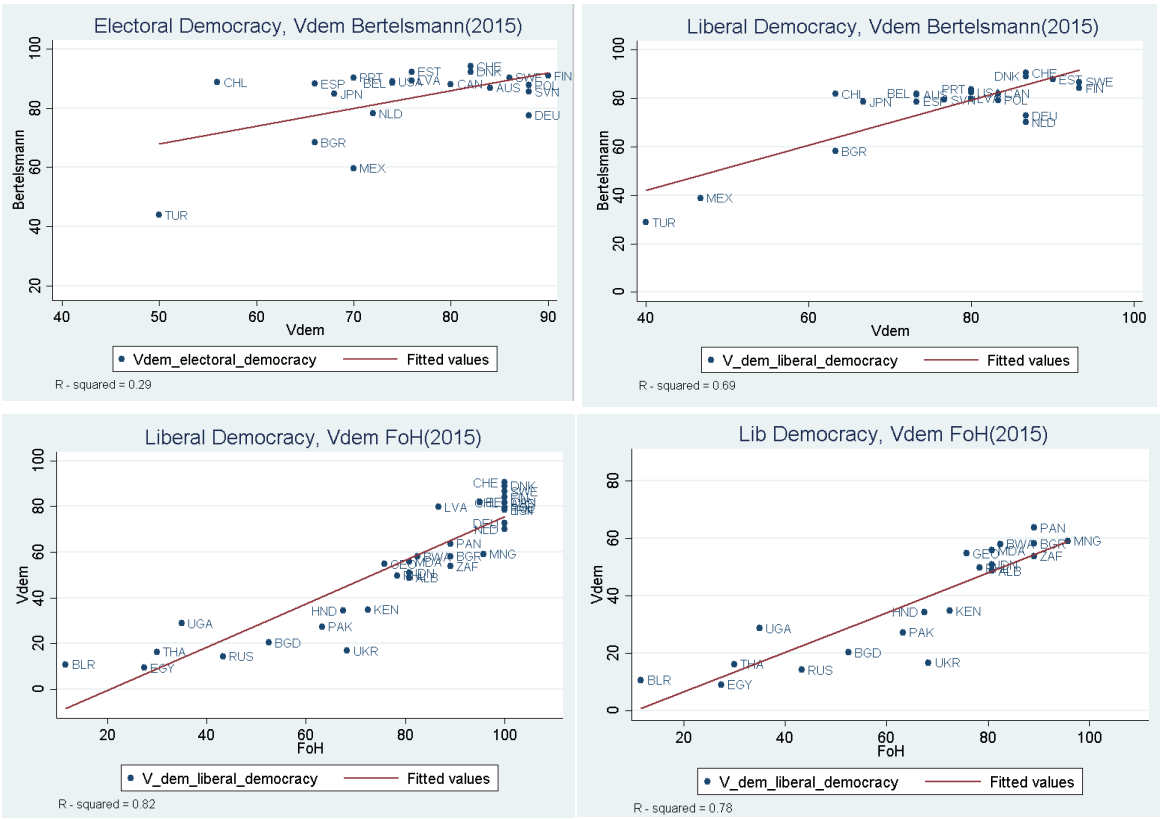
[29] A measure can be valid but not reliable if it produces the correct result on average but with a wide variance.

[30] Contingent validity is a fourth criterion of validity that applies where validity can be directly assessed. For example, a measure of taxes paid has contingent validity if it is compiled from a complete set of tax receipts associated with a person. The measure is valid *contingent* on using a data source that directly measures the concept of interest.

example, within its measure of quality of democracy, Bertelsmann differentiates between (and develop sub-measures of) *electoral process, civil rights and political liberties, access to information and the rule of law*, while Freedom House's measures refer to *civil liberties and political rights.* Due to data availability, the evidence below is limited to two aspects of democracy, i.e. *electoral* aspects (based on data from Bertelsmann and V-Dem), through measures of the existence and procedural features of elections, and *liberal* aspects (based on Bertelsmann, and Freedom House data), through measures of freedoms, individual rights, absence of discrimination and state repression.[31]

45. Figure 2 present cross-country correlations of democracy based on the indicators described above. The R squared (0.29) for measures of electoral democracy is weaker than for measures of liberal democracy (between 0.69 and 0.82), a pattern that also holds when the analysis is restricted to non OECD countries. This suggests that measures of liberal democracy from these sources lead to more consistent conclusions than measures of electoral democracy. Lack of a broader set of comparators does not allow for a more comprehensive analysis of other features of democracy. A key challenge for measuring democracy through experts' assessments is the lack of common understanding about what ought to be measured, as reflected in the several definitions of the term.

Figure 2. Cross-country correlations between different measures of electoral and liberal democracy based on expert assessment



Source: Authors' analyses based on data from Freedom House and Varieties of Democracies.

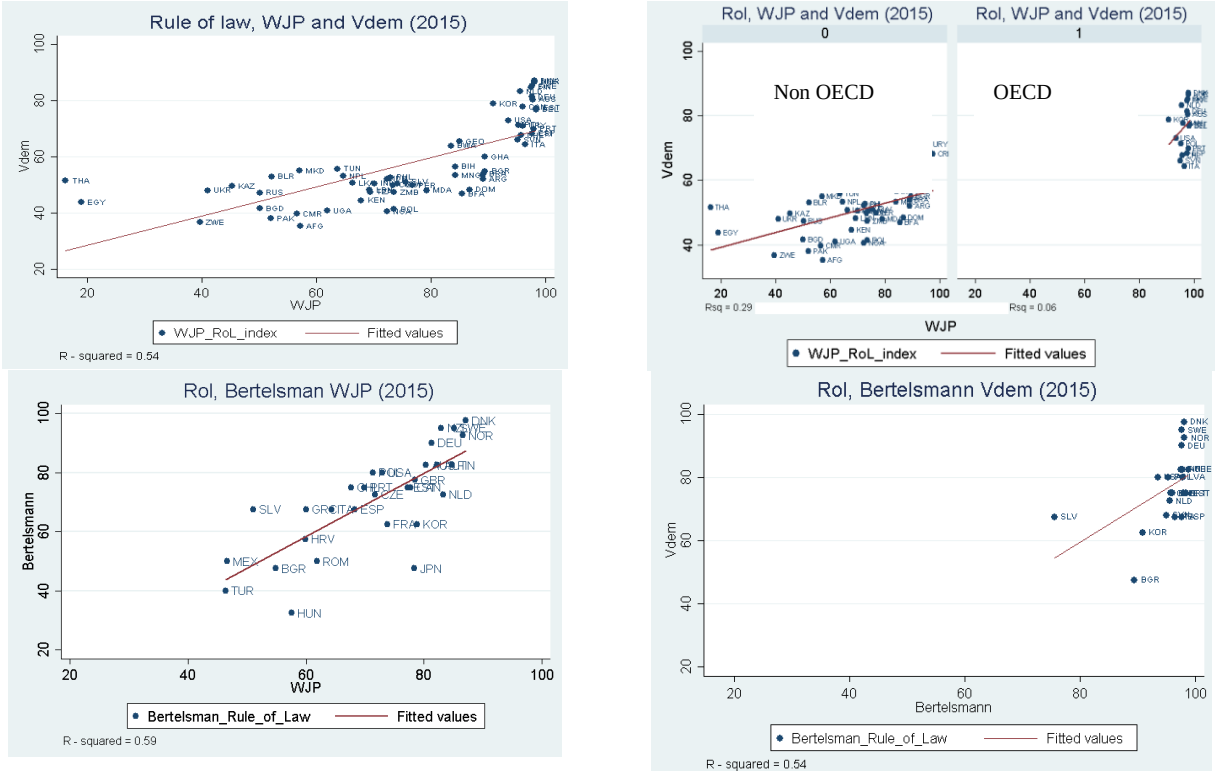
31 The analysis is conducted with all countries available for these sources unless specified otherwise.

46. A second set of reliability analysis relates to indicators aimed at measuring the degree of implementation of the rule of law in a given country. Rule of law is "notoriously difficult to define and measure" (WJP) and several interpretations of the concept have been out forward by various projects.[32] While these definitions have similarities, there are also some differences: for example, the WJP measures incorporate diversity within the justice system as a component of rule of law, an element that is absent in the Bertelsmann and V-Dem measures.

47. The R squared between different expert-based measures of the rule of law varies from 0.54 (V-Dem and Bertelsmann) to 0.59 (World Justice Project and Bertelsmann), indicating a moderately strong reliability across these measures. However, the picture changes when looking separately at OECD and non OECD member countries; in this case, the R squared falls to 0.06 for OECD countries and to 0.29 for non OECD countries, and this across all the measures analysed.

[32] For example, the WJP defines the rule of law as encompassing four universal principles: "the government and its officials and agents are accountable under the law; the laws are clear publicised, stable and just, applied evenly...; the process by which the laws are enacted, administered and enforced is accessible, fair and efficient; and justice is delivered timely by competent ethical and independent representatives... who are sufficient number, have adequate resources and reflect the makeup of communities they serve". For Bertelsmann the rule of law refers to legal certainty; judicial review; appointment of justices; and prevention of corruption. In turn, the V-Dem project has produced its own composite measure of the rule of law aimed at measuring "the independence of the judiciary; the extent to which rule of law prevails in civil and criminal matters; the existence of direct civil control over the police; the protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile and torture; absence of war and insurgencies; and the extent to which laws, policies and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population".

Figure 3. Cross country correlations between different measures of the rule of law based on expert assessments



Note: Data for Turkey were dropped from the V-Dem dataset as it behaves as an outlier.

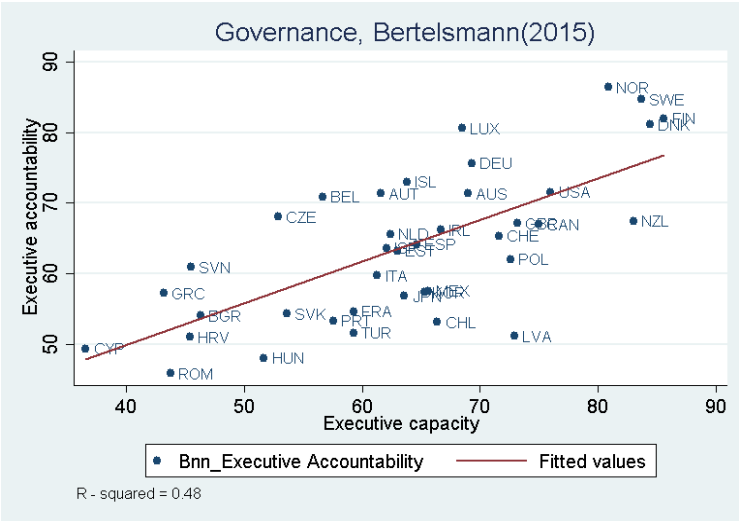
Source: Authors' analyses based on data from World Justice Project, Bertelsmann and Varieties of Democracies.

Correlation between governance dimensions measured by the same expert assessment project

48. Construct validity can be tested by looking at whether the different dimensions of governance as measured through the same expert assessment are correlated with each other (e.g. whether executive capacity is associated with executive accountability). This analysis can help to highlight whether the different dimensions of governance are capturing different facets of the same phenomenon, or are referring to fundamentally different phenomena. [33]

49. Within the SGI Bertelsmann, indicators are provided for two key characteristics: executive capacity and executive accountability. The first relates to the steering capabilities of governments, and is associated with features such as strategic capacity, inter-ministerial coordination, use of evidence based instruments, policy communication and adaptability. The second characteristic (executive accountability) refers to the extent to which non-governmental actors are involved in policy making, including the resources of legislative actors, the competence of citizens to participate in the policy making process, and the information provided by the media, etc. The R squared between the SGI Bertelsmann measures of both measures characteristics is 0.48, suggesting a moderately strong relation between both components of the governance index.

Figure 4. Cross-country correlations between two different dimensions of governance within the Bertelsmann Sustainable Governance Indicators



Source: Authors' analyses based on data from Bertelsmann governance indicators.

50. The Rule of Law index developed by the World Justice Project (WJP) is a highly aggregated measure aimed at measuring the implementation of the rule of law. The index is based on the aggregation of eight sub-components represented by composite indicators. Figure 5 shows the correlation coefficient between some of the factors that feed into the WJP main index. Looking at the left-hand panel, limited government powers refer to the extent to which those who govern are bound by law, while fundamental rights measure the protection of those rights. The R squared between these measures is 0.8, implying that both measures are plausibly capturing the same underlying concept: if those that govern are bound by law, then it is very likely that fundamental rights would also be protected.

[33] A potential drawback of drawing on the same source for assessing validity is that part of the correlation could be caused by shared method variance rather than by a real relation across dimensions.

51. The WJP rule of law index also incorporates two other sub-measures related to the judicial system: a civil justice measure, relating to whether ordinary people can resolve their grievances peacefully and effectively through the civil justice system; and a criminal justice measure, relating to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system for redressing grievances and bringing action against individuals for offenses against the society. The R squared between these components is 0.84, indicating that is difficult to discriminate between these two elements of the judicial system, i.e. the two indicators seem to provide an overall assessment of the justice system rather than the specificities of each component. This evidence suggests that room exists to improve parsimony of the Rule of Law indicator.

Figure 5. Cross country correlations of different dimensions of the rule of law as understood by the World Justice Project

Source: Authors' analyses based on data from the World Justice Project.

Non-official household surveys

Empirical evidence

52. Mirroring the previous part on expert assessments, this section investigates the reliability of non-official survey measures of governance i.e. the extent to which different non-official surveys provide coherent information on the same item. For example, the analysis considers whether countries that record higher scores in one aspect of governance (e.g. corruption) in one survey similarly record high scores when the same aspect is assessed through a different survey. This is done by looking at correlation (across countries) for three aspects of governance, i.e. trust in public institutions (Figure 6), satisfaction with services (Figure 7), and perception of corruption (Figure 8)[34]. The analysis focuses on these aspects as question-wording across surveys is quite similar; and on surveys covering most countries in the OECD region, i.e. the Gallup World Poll (GWP), the European Social Survey (ESS), the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

53. Figure 6 shows correlations for trust in three types of public institutions, (i.e. the national government, the legal system, and the police) in the Gallup World Poll (on the vertical axis) and the

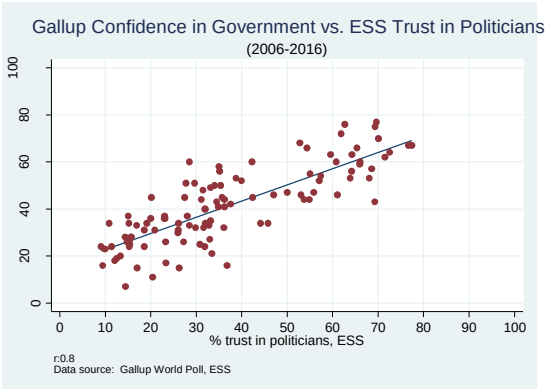
34 In the context of its work to develop guidelines on measuring trust, the OECD has constructed a large panel dataset bringing together country-average data from multiple surveys. This data so far set covers 124 countries over the period 2002-2016.

European Social Survey (on the horizontal one). The correlation is significant at the 1% level in all three cases, ranging between r= 0.81 for trust in the national government, 0.85 for trust in the police, and 0.93 for trust in the legal systems. For trust in both the legal system and the national government, the share of respondents reporting high trust ranges between 10% and 80%, with most countries reporting values between 50% and 100% for trust in the police. This provides *prima facie* evidence that answers to survey questions on trust in various public institutions are reliable, and that responses are not unduly affected by differences in the question-wording and response-scales used by various surveys. These results are consistent with those reported for a broader set of trust measures (OECD, 2017b).

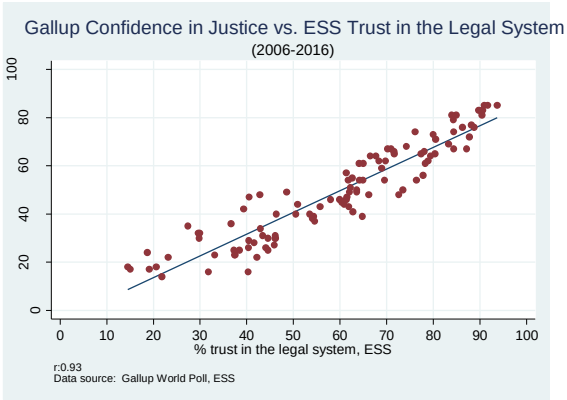
54. Figure 7 repeats the reliability analysis, considering respondents' answers to questions about their satisfaction with three types of public services, i.e. public transport, health-care and education services; the two sources used are, in this case, the Gallup World Poll (on the vertical axis) and the European Quality of Life Survey (on the horizontal ones). Correlations are significant at the 1% level in all three cases. For both health-care and education, cross-country correlations are high (r=0.83 and r=0.8 respectively), and therefore display a similar pattern than observed for the trust in institutions questions discussed above. For satisfaction with public transport, the correlation is only medium-sized (r=0.53), and weakens when “outliers” are excluded from the analysis. Figure 8 highlights correlations for questions about perceived corruption drawn from the Gallup World Poll and the International Social Survey Programme – here, the relationship between the two variables is high with r= 0.86, once again significant at the 1% level. Overall, this evidence suggests that reliability is quite strong for most aspects of governance. Similar analysis would need to be carried out for other aspects beyond the ones considered here is order to fully assess the quality of available survey data.

Figure 6. People's trust in different types of public institutions across alternative sources

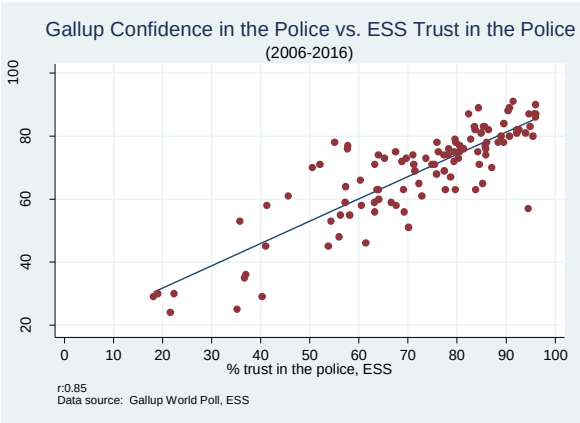
A. Trust in the government



B. Trust in the legal system



C. Trust in the police

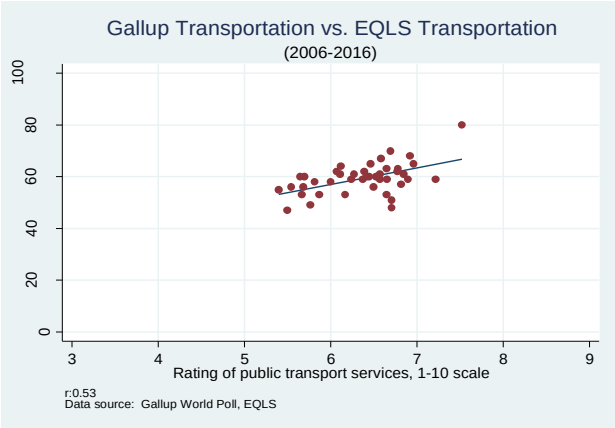


Note: Data on the y axis are drawn from the Gallup World Poll and shows the percentage of people that answered yes to the question: “In this country, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about: national government? (panel A); the judicial system and courts? (panel B); the local police force? (panel C)” Data on the x axis are from the European Social Survey and shows the percentage of people that indicated a score of 5-10 on a 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust) scale for the question: “How much personally do you trust each of these institutions? Politicians (panel A)/ legal system (panel B)/ police (panel C)”. The countries covered by both the Gallup World Poll and the European Social Survey are: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. All the correlations shown are significant at the 1% level.

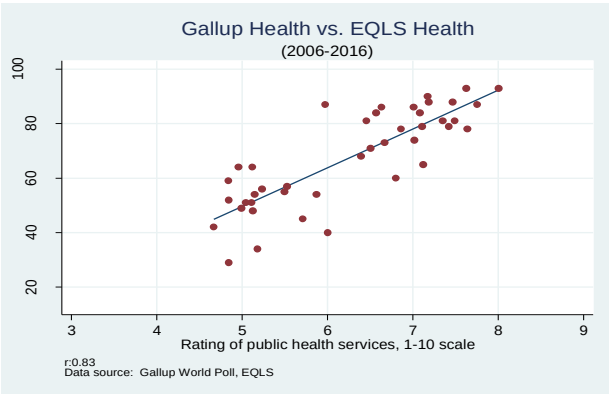
Source: Authors' analyses based on data from the Gallup World Poll and European Social Survey.

Figure 7. People's satisfaction with different types of public services across alternative surveys

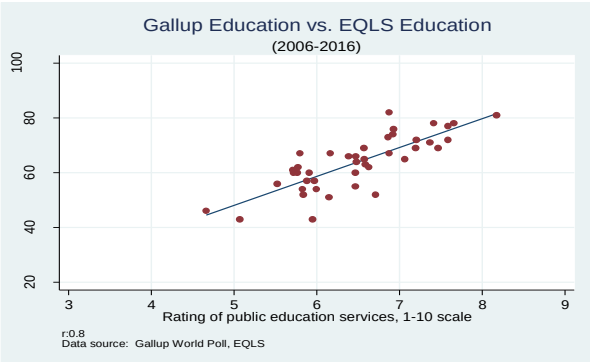
A. Public transport



B. Heath care



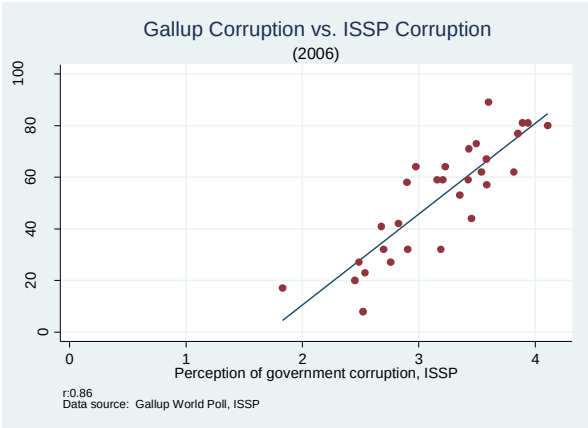
C. Education



Note: Data on the y axis are drawn from the Gallup World Poll and shows the percentage of people who answered yes to the question: "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with: the public transportation systems? (panel A); the availability of health care? (panel B); the availability of quality education? (panel C)" Data on the x axis are drawn from the European Quality of Life Survey and shows the respondent's replies on a 0 (very poor quality) to 10 (very high quality) scale for the question: "In general, how would you rate each of the following public services in (Country)? Public transport (panel A)/ health services (panel B)/ education system (panel C)". The countries that are covered by both the Gallup World Poll and the European Quality of Life Survey are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. All correlations shown are significant at the 1% level.

Source: Authors' analyses based on data from the Gallup World Poll and European Quality of Life Survey.

Figure 8. People's perceptions of corruption across alternatives sources



Note: Data on the y axis are drawn from the Gallup World Poll and shows the percentage of people that answered yes to the question: "Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?" Data on the x axis are drawn from the International Survey Programme and the respondents' replies on a 0 (almost none) to 4 (almost all) scale for the question: "In your opinion, about how many politicians/public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?" The countries that are covered under both the Gallup World Poll and the International Social Survey Programme are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Correlations are significant at the 1% level.

Source: Authors' analyses based on data from the Gallup World Poll and the International Social Survey Programme.

55. One way of assessing the construct validity of a measure is to look at whether the different aspects of governance, as measured through the same survey, are highly correlated with each other across countries in a way that is consistent with theory and common sense. This analysis may help to highlight whether survey-data on various aspects of governance are capturing different facets of the same underlying phenomenon or are referring to fundamentally different phenomena. Table 7 shows cross-country Pearson correlation coefficients across a number of governance aspects (i.e. perceptions of corruption, trust in various types of public institutions, civic engagement, and satisfaction with various types of public services) based on data drawn from the Gallup World Poll. Several of these correlations behave as expected. For example, trust in the government, the judicial system and the police are highly correlated with each other, and are highest in countries where perceived corruption is lowest. Of the three types of services considered, health-care and education are those most correlated with other aspects governance.[35] All correlation coefficients considered are significant at the 1% level.

56. Correlations such as those shown in Table 6 have to be interpreted with caution, as all subjective questions from the same survey can be affected respondent's personality and actual experiences with government (in other words, shared method variance). Overall, however, they support the idea that certain aspects of governance, especially those belonging to the domain of "outcomes" and, to a lesser extent, on "processes", if measured through household surveys, show a satisfying degree of construct validity.

[35] A possible reason is that opportunities for governmental abuse, e.g. bribes, are more likely to occur in hospitals and schools rather than in a country's transport system (Jain, 2001).

Table 6. Cross-country correlations across different aspect of governance as measured in the Gallup World Poll

	Government corruption	Trust in government	Trust in the justice system	Trust in the police	Satisfaction with public transport	Satisfaction with health services
Trust in government	-0.48***					
Trust in the justice system	-0.51***	0.68***				
Trust in the police	-0.5***	0.45***	0.67***			
Satisfaction with public transport	-0.28***	0.13***	0.2***	0.18***		
Satisfaction with health services	-0.47***	0.24***	0.5***	0.54***	0.63***	
Satisfaction with education services	-0.34***	0.34***	0.42***	0.37***	0.66***	0.77***

Note: Pearson correlation coefficients between the answers to the following questions: "Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?", "In this country, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about national government/ the judicial system and courts / the local police force?", "Have you done any of the following in the past month? How about voiced your opinion to a public official?", "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the public transportation systems / the availability of health care/ the availability of quality education?". The response scale for all questions is binary and offers a yes or no option to the survey respondents. The countries covered under the Gallop World Poll are: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uzbekistan.

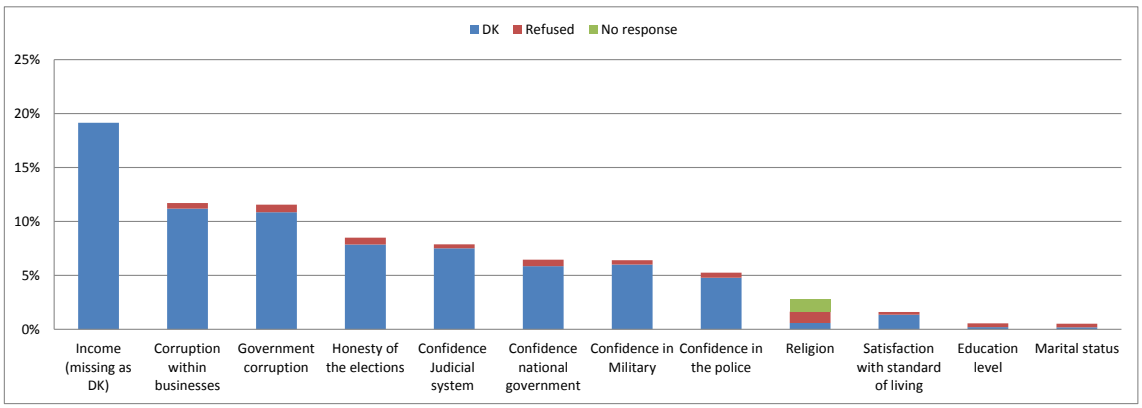
*** denotes significance at the 1% level

Source: Authors' analyses based on data from the Gallup World Poll.

57. Face validity, in the case of surveys, is about whether respondents can make sense of what is asked to them. One way of assessing face validity is by looking at response rates. Figure 9 shows item non-response rates in the case of the Gallup World Poll corruption question, at 11% of respondents (similar for OECD and non OECD member countries.) This item specific non response rate is relatively high when compared questions on satisfaction with standard of living (1.6%), education (0.4%) or marital status (0.3%). The relatively high item-specific non response rate for the corruption question suggests that respondents may find this question difficult to answer, that they have insufficient knowledge of it, or consider the topic to be politically sensitive. Item non response rates for questions about the honesty of election and trust in various institutions are lower, between 5 and 10%.[36] Overall, while the non-response rates for the corruption questions give a mixed picture for face validity, they are still well below the values recorded for routinely collected income questions.

[36] Recommendations for reducing the political sensitivity of trust in government questions, which may face similar challenges as corruption questions, through survey design and mode will be provided in the Guidelines for Measuring Trust (OECD, 2017b).

Figure 9. Percentage of item specific non-response rate by selected questions GWP



Source: Authors calculations based on data from the Gallup World Poll.

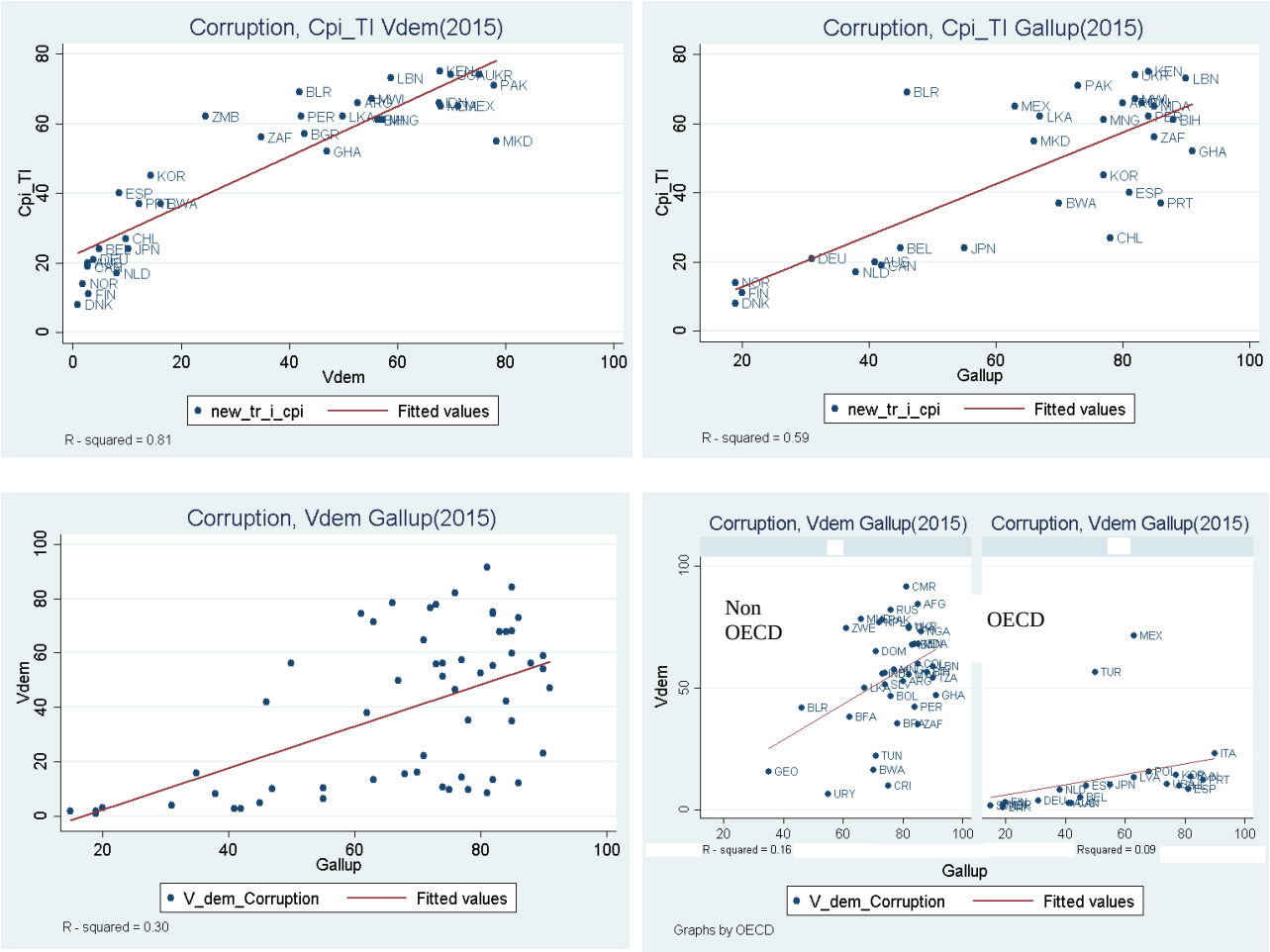
Do experts' assessments and household surveys lead to the same conclusions?

58. A way of testing the convergent validity of data from household surveys and expert assessments is to compare these measures vis-à-vis one another. This is possible for the concept of corruption, which is measured both via expert based measures (V-Dem) and household surveys (Gallup World Poll), and through a measure that combines both sources, i.e. the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) developed by Transparency International. This CPI combines experts' views and survey questions on misuse of public power for private benefit, e.g. bribe-taking by public officials in public procurement (without distinguishing between administrative and political corruption). The V-Dem measure of corruption encompasses both public sector corruption and political corruption, while the Gallup World Poll survey measure is based on the following question "Is corruption widespread throughout the government?"

59. The R squared coefficient between the two expert based measures, V-Dem and TI, is high (0.81), indicating strong convergent validity across them. However, when comparing the expert measures with a household survey the R squared coefficient decreases, ranging between 0.30 (V-Dem and Gallup World Poll) and 0.59 (CPI and Gallup World Poll). Correlations are even weaker when separately considering OECD and non OECD countries[37], (0.09 for the former countries and 0.16 for the latter, when comparing V-Dem and Gallup World Poll data). See Figure 9 for illustrations.

[37] Corruption measures based on household surveys tend to capture petty "need" corruption, while the object of measurement of expert based assessments also includes "greed" political corruption. In this context, the correlations reported in Figure 9 are not surprising and emphasize the complementarity of both approaches.

Figure 10. Cross-country correlations of corruption measures between expert-assessment and household surveys



Source: Authors calculations based on data from the Gallup World Poll, Transparency International and V-Dem dataset.

6. Conclusions

60. This paper has described a variety of governance statistics that are already produced in OECD countries by several data producers through different tools. These statistics range from aggregate democracy indicators compiled by experts or academics, to surveys of public officials conducted by international organisations, to administrative data collected by various public agencies as part of their daily functioning, to data from household surveys conducted by commercial providers and research institutes. Within the official statistical system, some NSOs (e.g. INEGI) also compile statistics on some aspects of governance through censuses, surveys, or based on the processing and standardisation of administrative records.

61. However, while the amount of data and statistics on governance has increased over the past three decades, little evidence exists on the quality of these data, and on their capacity to accurately capture the concepts under study. The paper has provided examples, limited to a narrow range of governance aspects and sources, of the type of statistical analysis that would be required to ensure the "fitness for purpose" of existing governance indicators. Overall, this evidence provided in this paper is mixed: while measures for some of the governance aspects studied (e.g. trust, the liberal features of democracy) seem to be quite

reliable (with consistent information provided by various measurement vehicles), for others (such as the rule of law or the electoral features of democracy) evidence is less conclusive. Also, results on the quality of various measures depend on the facet of validity considered (i.e. face, construct and convergent validity). For example, expert- and survey-based measures seem to lead to different conclusions about the prevalence of corruption in various countries. Finally, measures for some aspects of governance such as rule of law display different patterns for different groups of countries (OECD and non-OECD countries) calling for careful interpretation of the data.

62. The assessment provided by this paper highlight several challenges that the statistical community will need to address before it can generate more reliable and comparable evidence.

- First, a conceptual framework for governance statistics is still lacking. No universal definition of governance currently exists, implying that various agencies and researchers interpret the term in their own way, referring to (partially overlapping) items such as effectiveness, impartiality, accountability, democratic quality, non-discrimination, state capacity, etc. Even when the same term is used by various actors, it may have different meaning while, conversely, different actors may use different terms to describe the same phenomena. Reaching agreement on the conceptual scope of governance statistics, identifying its main domains and aspects, defining boundaries separating what is included and what is excluded from the remit of governance statistics should be a priority task for the statistical community. While this paper has relied on the distinction between the three domains of “principles”, “processes” and “outcomes” to describe and classify governance statistics, a common framework will need to be agreed by the statistical community. The Praia Group on Governance Statistics should play the key role in that process.

- Second, once concepts are clear, a statistical framework will need to be developed. A statistical framework brings together a conceptual framework relating to the variable of interest, the measurement instruments required for quantifying it, and the statistical infrastructure needed to ensure that data are collected in a way consistent with quality standards. Building such a statistical framework will require aligning different aspects of governance with the measurement tools best apt at quantifying them. While administrative data have a special role to play in measuring governance, special efforts are needed to create systems capable of providing statistics meeting quality requirements of timeliness, frequency and comparability**.** Other measurement instruments such as surveys of households and business, as well as measures drawn from assessments by public officials and researchers, also play an essential role in meeting demands for broader and more comparable statistics in the governance field.

- Third, as conceptual and statistical frameworks are created, a critical task will be that of identifying good-quality measures that could be used to populate these frameworks. This is a labour-intensive endeavour, which requires assessing the validity of the measures that already exist. Establishing the accuracy of a statistical measure is especially complex when it comes to broad concepts such as governance, as it requires reviewing the information that is already available to assess the different facets of validity. While such an assessment is currently being conducted at the OECD with respect to measures of trust, similar analysis will be required for other aspects of governance (corruption, justice, rule of law, access and quality of basic services) in order to identify a set of measures falling within the remit of official statistics.

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ANNEX 1. SELECTED QUESTIONS ON GOVERNANCE IN NON-OFFICIAL SURVEYS

This Annex illustrates the types (and wording) of questions on governance currently included in selected non-official household surveys. Drawing on the classification of governance aspects used throughout this paper, a number of questions is presented for each of the three domains (i.e. principles, processes, and outcomes) and their key aspects (i.e. democratic preferences, quality of democracy, absence of corruption, non-discrimination, civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, and satisfaction with services). Questions in both core and ad-hoc survey modules are considered.[38] This Annex focuses on the following surveys: Eurobarometer, European Quality of Governance Survey (EQGS), European Social Survey (ESS), Gallup World Poll (Gallup), International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), World Values Survey (WVS). While the questions listed below are not exhaustive in terms of covering all non-official surveys and every question variant, this Annex it highlights the breath of available items and their focus on similar aspects of governance. However, the Annex also underscores the current lack of question standardization in the field.

1. Principles: what is expected from public institutions?

Democratic preferences

- "I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?"; and "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections/ Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country/ Having a democratic political system/ Having the army rule". *(WVS)*

- "Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy. Use this scale where 1 means "not at all an essential characteristic of democracy" and 10 means it definitely is "an essential characteristic of democracy"; and "People choose their leaders in free elections/ The army takes over when government is incompetent/ Civil rights protect people from state oppression/ people obey their rulers". *(WVS)*

- "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? On this scale where 1 means it is "not at all important" and 10 means "absolutely important" what position would you choose?" *(WVS)*

- "There are many ways people or organisations can protest against a government action they strongly oppose. Please show which you think should be allowed and which should not be allowed: Organizing public meetings to protest against the government/ Organising protest marches and demonstrations/ Organising a nationwide strike of all workers against the government". *(ISSP)*

- "There are some people whose views are considered extreme by the majority. Consider people who want to overthrow the government by revolution. Do you think such people should be

[38] After each question, the survey source is indicated in parenthesis.

allowed to hold public meetings to express their views/publish books expressing their views?" *(ISSP)*

Quality of democracy

- "Do the media in this country have a lot of freedom, or not?" *(Gallup)*
- "How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in this country?" *(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?" *(WVS)*
- "How frequently do the following things occur in your neighbourhood? Police or military interfere with people's private life" *(WVS)*
- "In your view, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections? Opposition candidates are prevented from running/ TV news favours the governing party/ Journalists provide fair coverage of elections/ Election officials are fair/Rich people buy elections/ Voters are threatened with violence at the polls/ Voters are offered a genuine choice in the election" *(WVS)*
- "How well does democracy work in (Country) today?" *(ISSP)*
- "Thinking of the last national election in (Country), how honest was it regarding the counting and reporting of the votes?" *(ISSP)*
- "Thinking of the last national election in (COUNTRY), how fair was it regarding the opportunities of the candidates and parties to campaign?" *(ISSP)*
- "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in (Country)?" *(European Social Survey)*
- "I trust the information provided by the local mass media in reporting on matters of politics and public services in my area." *(EQGS)*

2. Processes: how do public institutions perform their role?

Civic engagement

- "Please look carefully at the list of organisations and tell us, how often did you do unpaid voluntary work through the following organisations in the last 12 months? Political parties/ trade unions". *(EQLS)*
- "Over the last 12 months, have you…attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group/ attended a protest or demonstration/ signed a petition, including an email or online petition/ contacted a politician or public official (other than routine contact arising from use of public services)?" *(EQLS)*
- "Have you done any of the following in the past month? How about voiced your opinion to a public official?" *(Gallup)*

- "Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization? Labour Union/ Political Party/ Environmental organization/ Professional association/ Consumer organization". *(WVS)*

- "I'm going to read out some forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never under any circumstances do it: Signing a petition/ Joining in boycotts/ Attending peaceful demonstrations/ Joining strikes/ Any other form of political action". *(WVS)*

- "People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups or associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you, belong and actively participate, belong but don't actively participate, used to belong but do not any more, or have never belonged to it: A political party/ a trade union, business or professional association". *(ISSP)*

- "Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past, whether you have not done it but might do it or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it.: Signed a petition/ boycotted a product for ethical social or political reasons/took part in a demonstration/ attended a political meeting or rally/ contacted a civil servant/ joined an internet political forum/ contacted the media to express my views". *(ISSP)*

- "There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you... contacted a politician, government or local government official/ worked in a political party or action group/ worked in another organisation or association/worn or displayed a campaign badge or sticker/ signed a petition/taken part in a lawful public demonstration/ boycotted certain products?" *(European Social Survey)*

Non-discrimination

- "In your opinion, how often do public officials deal fairly with people like you?" *(ISSP)*

- "Do you think that the treatment people get from public officials in (Country) depends on who they know?" *(ISSP)*

- "How much would you say… the political system in (Country) allows people like you to have a say in what the government does/ that the political system in (Country) allows people like you to have an influence on politics/ that politicians care what people like you think?" *(ESS)*

- "How much do you agree with the following statements: Certain people are given special advantages in the public education system in my area/ Certain people are given special advantages in the public health care system in my area/ The police force gives special advantages to certain people in my area/ All citizens are treated equally in the public health care system in my area/ All citizens are treated equally by the police force in my area." *(EQGS)*

Absence of corruption

- "Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?" *(Gallup)*

- "Using a scale where 1 means lower and 10 means higher: How widespread do you think that corruption is within the government in your country/ Do you think the level of corruption in this country is lower, about the same, or higher than it was five years ago?" *(WVS)*

- "Sometimes people have to give a bribe or a present in order to solve their problems or receive services which are supposed to be for free. In the last 12 months, how often were you personally faced with this kind of situation?" *(WVS)*

- "Do you think the government of your country is doing enough to fight corruption, or not?" *(WVS)*

- "In your opinion, about how many politicians/public officials in (Country) are involved in corruption? How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in (Country)?" *(ISSP)*

- "In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?" *(ISSP)*

- "For each of the following statements, could you please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with it: Corruption is a major problem in (Country)/ There is corruption in local institutions in (Country)/ There is corruption in national institutions in (Country)/ There are enough successful prosecutions in (Country) to deter people from giving or receiving bribes." *(Eurobarometer)*

- "How much do you agree with the following statements: Corruption is prevalent in my area's local public school system/ Corruption is prevalent in the public health system in my area/ Corruption is prevalent in the police force in my area/ Corruption is NOT present in elections on my area." *(EQGS)*

- "In the past 12 months have you or anyone living in your household… paid a bribe in any form to education services/paid a bribe in any form to health or medical services/ paid a bribe in any form to police/ paid a bribe in any form to any other government-run agency?" *(EQGS)*

- "In your opinion, how often do you think other people in your area use bribery to obtain other special advantages that they are not entitled to?" *(EQGS)*

3. Valued outcomes: what do public institutions deliver that is important to people?

Political Efficacy

- "How interested would you say you are in politics?" *(WVS)*
- "For each of the following, indicate how important it is in your life: Politics." *(WVS)*
- "How interested would you say you personally are in politics?" *(ISSP)*
- "Please tick one box on each line to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. People like me don't have any say about what the government does. The average citizen has considerable influence on politics. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country. I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am." *(ISSP)*
- "How able do you think you are to take an active role in a group involved with political issues?" *(ESS)*
- "How confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?" *(ESS)*
- "How easy do you personally find it to take part in politics?" *(ESS)*
- "How interested would you say you are in politics?" *(ESS)*

Trust in Institutions

- "Please tell me how much you personally trust the following institutions: Parliament/ the legal system/ the press/ the police/ the government/ the local municipal authorities". *(EQLS)*
- "In this country, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about national government/ judicial system and courts/ the local police force/the military?" *(Gallup)*
- "Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of this country?" *(Gallup)*
- "I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all? The armed forces/ The police/ The courts/ The European Union/ Political parties/ Parliament/ The Civil Service/ The United Nations" *(WVS)*
- "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Most politicians are in politics only for what they can get out of it personally/ Most of the time we can trust people in government to do what is right/ Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country" *(ISSP)*
- "How much personally do you trust each of these institutions? Parliament/ Legal system/ Politicians/ Political parties/ Police/ European parliament/ European Union". *(ESS)*
- "Now thinking about the (Country) government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?" *(ESS)*

- "I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? National government/ The legal system/ The police/ The army/ Political parties/ Regional or local public authorities/ The press". *(Eurobarometer)*

Satisfaction with services

- "In general, how would you rate each of the following public services in (Country)? Health services/ Education system/ Public transport/ Child care services/ Long-term care services/ Social or municipal housing/ State pension system". *(EQLS)*

- "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with... The availability of good, affordable housing/ The public transportation system/ The roads and highways/ The availability of quality healthcare/ The availability of quality education?" *(Gallup)*

- "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of the following: The public transportation systems/ The roads and highways/ The schools/ The quality of health care/ The quality of housing". *(WVS)*

- "How successful do you think the government in [Country] is nowadays in each of the following areas: Providing health care for the sick/ Providing a decent standard of living for the old/ Dealing with threats to (Country's) security/ Controlling crime/ Fighting unemployment/ Protecting the environment?" *(ISSP)*

- "Now, using this card, please say what you think overall about the state of education/ of health services/ in (Country) nowadays?" *(ESS)*

- "How would you rate the quality of public education/of the public health care system/ of the police force in your area?" *(EQGS)*