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**Quality of Democracy in Quadruple Helix
Structures: The Quality of Democracy in
the United States and in Austria,
Challenges and Opportunities for
Development**

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Explaining and Comparing Quality of Democracy in Quadruple Helix Structures:

The Quality of Democracy in the United States and in Austria, Challenges and Opportunities for Development

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1. Introduction: Research Question for the Analysis and Presentation of the Research Design

This contribution focuses on analyzing the quality of democracy of the United States (U.S.) and of Austria by using a comparative approach. Even though comparisons are not the only possible or legitimate method of research, this analysis is based on the opinion that comparisons provide crucial analytical perspectives and learning opportunities. Following is the proposition, put directly forward: *national political systems (political systems) are comprehensively understood only by using an international comparative approach.* International comparisons (of country-based systems) are common (see the status of comparative politics, for example in Sodaro, 2004). Comparisons do not have to be based necessarily on national systems alone, but can also be carried out using “within”-comparisons inside (or beyond) sub-units or regional sub-national systems, for instance the individual provinces in the case of Austria (Campbell, 2007, p. 382).

The pivotal analytical research question of this contribution is two-fold: (1) to compare the quality of democracy of the United States (U.S.) internationally and to “assess” (evaluate) American democracy, whereas assessing (evaluation) in this scenario refers to putting results of the comparative rating in the form of propositions (theses) for further discussions; (2) this same frame of reference will also be used to compare the quality of democracy in Austria internationally, and to propose more specifically a whole set of reform measures for further improvement of the quality of Austrian democracy in the nearer future.¹ In this line of thinking the United States and Austria mark the two more specific country cases that will be compared in the analysis presented here (they represent the “poles” of our thinking). The national political systems of the United States and Austria are the main references in this case in which American (U.S.) and

¹) This also explains the empirical focus of the used literature on Austria, as is being documented in the reference list at the end. Regarding the United States, we do not engage in developing recommendations for reform measures in the context of the analysis presented here.

Austrian democracy and quality of democracy are to be compared with all other member countries of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development) and of the European Union (EU15, EU27) for a comparative analysis, thus leading to a country-based comparison of democratic quality.² Supranational aggregations (like of the whole European Union at EU level) or transnational aggregations (global level) shall not be dealt with. The OECD primarily comprises of the systems of Western Europe (EU as well as Non-EU), North America (U.S. and Canada), Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Outside these regions, Israel, Mexico and Chile are part of the OECD, which highlights the global expansion of OECD. The OECD countries can be *majorly* determined over the following two features: economically as “advanced economies” (IMF, 2011, p. 150), and politically the majority of the OECD countries are determined as “established democracies” or as “Western democracies”. Furthermore, we may also discuss, how relevant the concepts of “advanced societies” and “advanced democracies” are (Carayannis and Campbell, 2011, p. 367; also Carayannis and Campbell, 2012). However, in this context it appears more crucial that the OECD countries (again by the majority) can be seen as an empirical manifestation of liberal democracy, as known in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Ludger Helms (2007, p. 18) pointed out: “For a system to be identified as a liberal democracy, or simply as liberal-democratic, liberal as well as democratic elements have to be realized in adequate volumes.”³ Just as decisive is Helms’ (2007, p. 20) statement: “The political systems of Western Europe, North America and Japan examined in this study can be distinguished – despite all the differences – as liberal democracies.” Since the OECD countries are majorly represented by advanced democracies and advanced economies, the OECD countries are very suitable as a Peer Group for the comparisons to be made with the United States and with Austria, in order to carry out a “fair” comparison. For a comparison of the quality of democracy of the United States and of Austria, the “comparative benchmark” must be of the highest possible standard, in order to submit theses questioning about which other democracies can have a positive effect on the American as well as Austrian

²) Most, however not all, member countries of the EU are also member countries to the OECD.

³) Quotes from original sources in German were translated into English by the authors of this analysis (DC and EC).

quality of democracy. *Concerning quality of democracy, what can the United States learn from other democracies?* This same question may be also applied to Austrian democracy.

The emphasis on the American and Austrian quality of democracy in comparison with OECD will not lie on a time-series pattern; instead it will focus on an indicator-specific system using empirical information available from the latest available year (mostly 2010, referring to data publicly accessible as of early 2012). A broad spectrum of indicators will be considered for this purpose, which appears to be necessary in order to conclude different (underlying) theories and models about quality of democracy. Follow-up studies will certainly be conceivable to integrate this empirically comparative snapshot of the quality of democracy of the United States and of Austria in a broader time perspective. As of January 2012, the OECD has over 34 member countries. *These OECD member countries define the primary reference framework for the international comparison in this analysis.* Since not every member state of the current EU27 is a member of the OECD, the decision to include the non-OECD-countries of the EU27 countries was made for the country comparison, which therefore results in an expansion of the group of countries to “OECD plus EU27”. These additional countries are Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Cyprus. In total, the quality of democracy of the United States and of Austria will be put into comparison with 39 other countries (including the U.S. and Austria, 40 countries).

There is naturally not only a single democracy theory (theory about quality of democracy), but the field of democratic theories is rather pluralistic and heterogeneous. Various theories and models co-exist about democracies (Cunningham, 2002; Held, 2006; Schmidt, 2010). Metaphorically, based on these (partly contradictory) different theories, democracy theory could also be constructed as a *meta-theory*. Theoretically, democracy can be understood as *multi-paradigmatic*, meaning that there is not only one (dominant) paradigm for democracy. Therefore, we have to state pluralism, competition, co-existence and co-development of different theories about democracy. *Our analysis is based on the additional assumption (which does not have to be shared necessarily) that between democracy theory on the one hand and democracy measurement on the other hand, important (also*

conceptual) cross-references (and linkages) take place. Within this logic, a further development or improvement of the democracy theory demands a systematic attempt of democracy measurement, regardless of how incomplete or problematic an empirical assessment of democracy is. Just like there is no “perfect” democracy measurement, there is also no “perfect” democracy theory (see for example Campbell and Barth, 2009; Lauth et al., 2000; Lauth 2004, 2010 and 2011; Munck, 2009; Schmidt 2010, pp. 370-398). Theories about the quality of democracy are partly already further developed, than it is often (in popular research) being assumed. One of the most important theory models about the quality of democracy that permits an empirical operationalization comes from Guillermo O’Donnell (2004a). The field of the quality of democracy is no longer a vague one, especially not for OECD-countries.

The further structure of this contribution is divided into the following three sections: in Section 2, different conceptualizations of democracy are presented, followed by the concrete empirical comparison of the quality of democracy in the United States and in Austria in Section 3. In the conclusion (Section 4), an attempt to assess the quality of democracy in the United States and in Austria is being made and measures for improving the Austrian democratic quality are presented for further discussion.

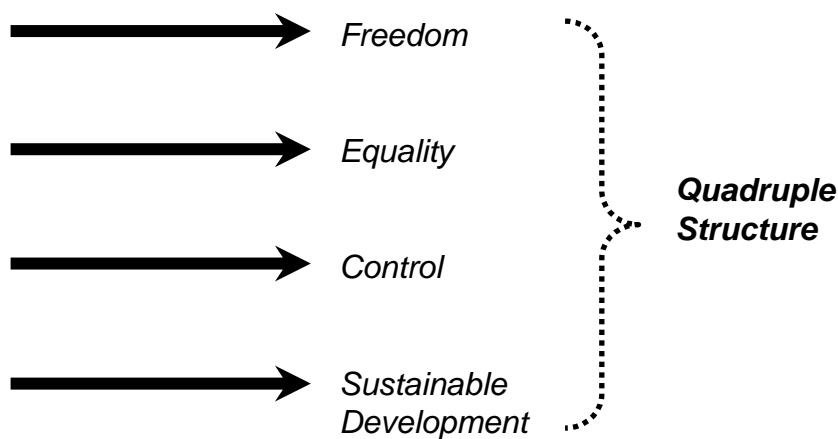
2. Conceptualizing Democracy and the Quality of Democracy: Freedom, Equality, Control and Sustainable Development (Model of Quadruple Helix Structures)

How can democracy and the quality of democracy be conceptualized? Such a (theoretically justified) conceptualization is necessary in order for democracy and the quality of democracy to be subjected to a democracy measurement, whereby democracy measurement, in this case, can be examined along the lines of the definition of democracy (thus democracy measurement to be utilized to improve the democracy theory). Hans-Joachim Lauth (2004, pp. 32-101) suggests in this context a “three dimensional concept of democracy”, which is composed of the following

(conceptual) dimensions: *equality, freedom and control* (see Figure 1).⁴ Lauth (2004: 96) underlines that these dimensions are “sufficient” to obtain a definition of democracy. The term “dimension” offers a conceptual elegance that can be applied “trans-theoretically”, meaning that different theories of democracy may be put in relation and may be mapped comparatively in reference to those dimensions. Metaphorically formulated, dimensions behave like “building blocks” for theories and theory development.

Figure 1: The Basic Quadruple-Dimensional Structure of Democracy and the Quality of Democracy.

Basic Dimensions of Democracy and the Quality of Democracy:



Source: Authors' own conceptualization and visualization, based on Campbell (2008, p. 32) and for the dimension of "control" on Lauth (2004, pp. 32-101).

Empirically, it should also be added that the traditional public perception of Western Europe indicates that individuals with a more-left political

⁴) These dimensions we want to interpret as “Basic Dimensions” of democracy and of the quality of democracy.

orientation prefer equality, and individuals with a more-right (conservative) political orientation have preferences for freedom (Harding et al., 1986, p. 87). The European left/right axis would translate itself well for the North American contexts by using a liberal/conservative axis (with left = liberal and right = conservative).

With regard to democracy and the quality of democracy, we are confronted with the following point-of-departure question: whether (1) democracy as a key feature or criterion exclusively refers or should refer to the political system or whether (2) democracy should also include social (societal), economic as well as ecological contexts of the political system. This produces implications on the selection of indicators to be used for democracy measurement. How “limited” or “broadly” focused should be the definition of democracy? This is also reflected in the *minimalistic versus maximalist* democracy theory debate (see for example: Sodaro 2004, pp. 168, 180, and 182). In this regard, various theoretical positions elaborate on this concept. Perhaps, it is (was) from an orthodox-point-of-view-of-theory to limit democracy to the political system (Munck, 2009, pp. 126-127). More recent approaches are more sensitive for the contexts of the political system, however, still must establish themselves in the political mainstream debates (see, for example, Stoiber, 2011). Nevertheless, explicit theoretical examples are emerging for the purpose of incorporation into the democracy models the social (societal), economic and ecological contexts. The theoretical model of the “Democracy Ranking” is an initiative that represents such an explicit example (Campbell, 2008).

Over time, democracy theories are becoming more complex and demanding in nature, regardless, whether the understanding of democracy refers only to the political system or includes also the contexts of the political system. This also reflects on the establishment of democracy models. The most simple democracy model is that of the “electoral democracy” (Helms, 2007, p. 19), also known as “voting democracy” (“*Wahldemokratie*”; Campbell and Barth, 2009, p. 212). An electoral democracy focuses on the process of elections, highlights the political rights and refers to providing minimum standards and rights, however, enough to be classified as a democracy. Freedom House (2011a) defines electoral democracy by using the following criteria: “A competitive, multiparty political system”; “Universal adult

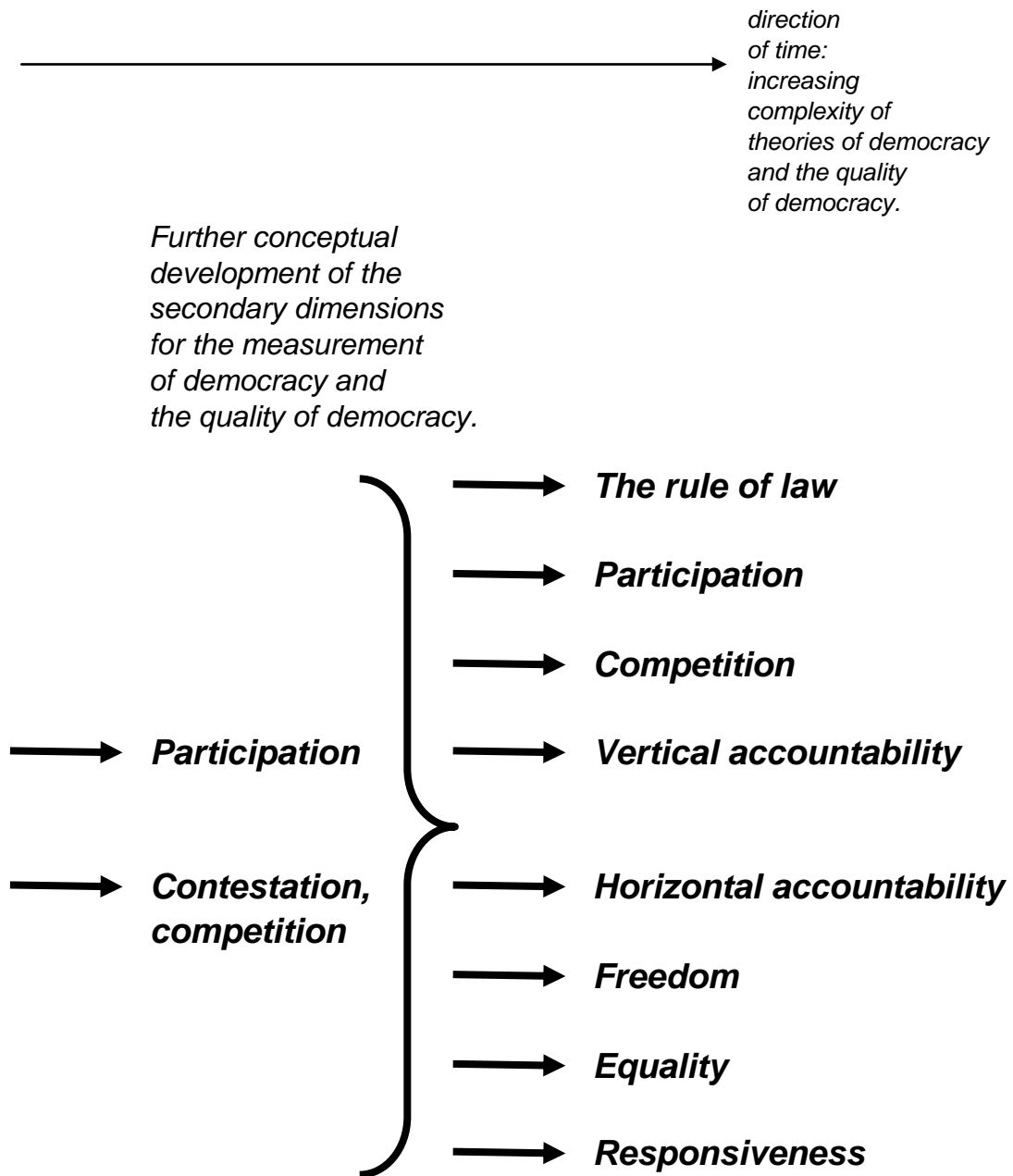
suffrage for all citizens”; “Regularly contested elections”; and “Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning”. The next, qualitatively better level of democracy is the so-called “liberal democracy”. A liberal democracy is characterized by political rights, and more importantly also by civil liberties as well as complex and sophisticated forms of institutionalization. The liberal democracy does not only want to fulfill minimum standards (thresholds), but aims on ascending to the quality and standards of a developed, hence, an advanced democracy. Every liberal democracy is also an electoral democracy, but not every electoral democracy is automatically a liberal democracy. In this regard, Freedom House (2011a) states: “Freedom House’s term ‘electoral democracy’ differs from ‘liberal democracy’ in that the latter also implies the presence of a substantial array of civil liberties. In the survey, all the ‘Free’ countries qualify as both electoral and liberal democracies. By contrast, some ‘Partly Free’ countries qualify as electoral, but not liberal, democracies.” Asserting different (perhaps ideal-typical) conceptual stages of development for a further quality increasing and progressing of democracy, we may put up for discussion the following stages: *electoral democracy*, *liberal democracy* and *advanced (liberal) democracy with a high quality of democracy*.

In *Polyarchy*, Robert A. Dahl (1971, pp. 2-9) comes to the conclusion that mostly two dimensions suffice in order to be able to describe the functions of democratic regimes: (1) *contestation* (“public contestation”, “political competition”) as well as (2) *participation* (“participation”, “inclusiveness”, “right to participate in elections and office”).⁵ Also relevant are Anthony Downs’ eight criteria in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957, pp. 23-24), defining a “democratic government”, but it could be argued that those are affiliated closer with an electoral democracy. In the beginning of the twenty-first century is the conceptual understanding of democracy and the quality of democracy already more differentiated, it can be said that crucial conceptual further developments are in progress. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (2004, pp. 22-28) have come up with an “eight dimensions of democratic quality” proposal. These include: (1) *rule of law*;

⁵) In the Figures 2 and 3, we propose to interpret these two dimensions, introduced by Dahl, as “Secondary Dimensions” for describing democracy and democracy quality for the objective of measuring democracy.

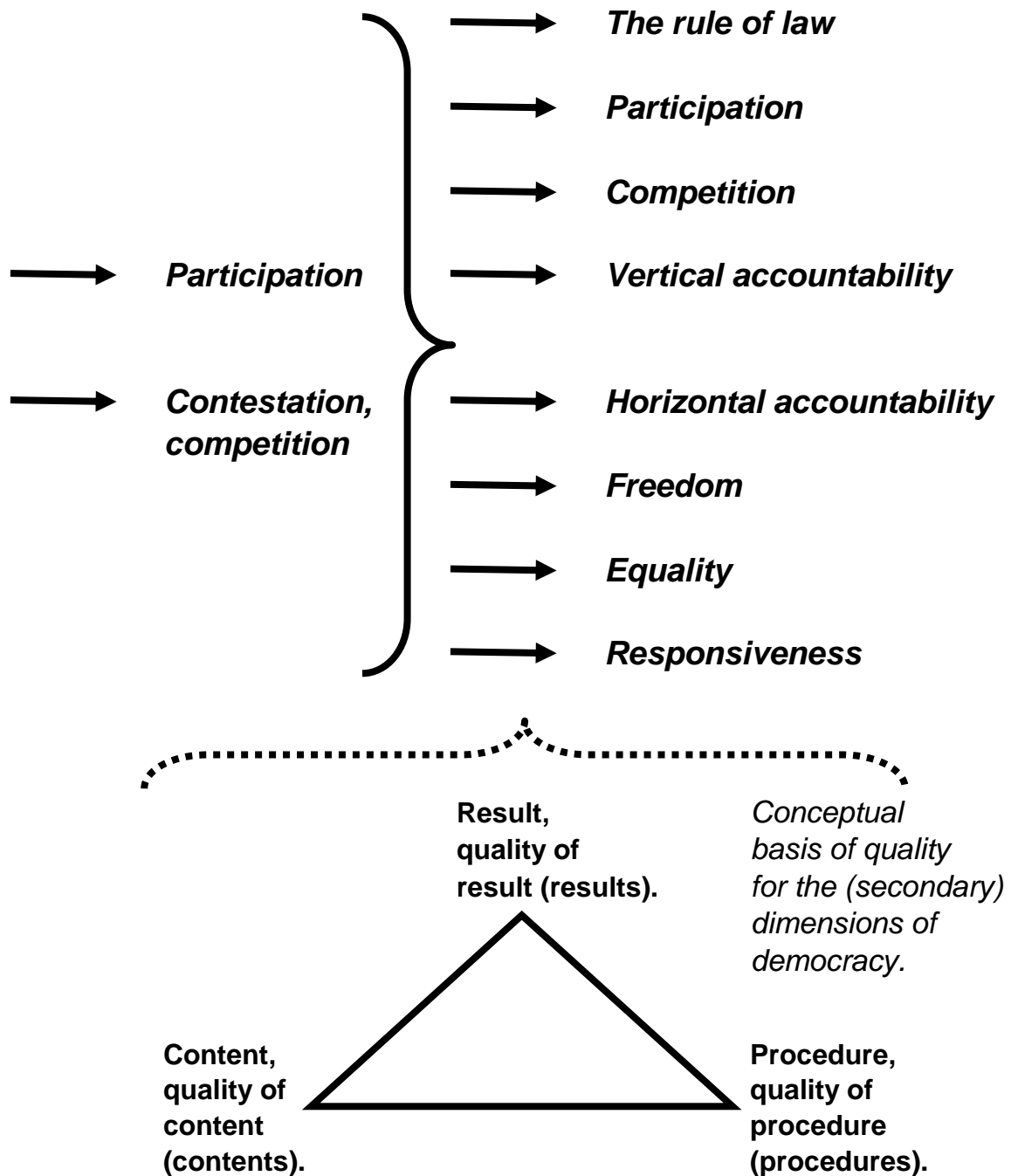
(2) *participation*; (3) *competition*; (4) *vertical accountability*; (5) *horizontal accountability*; (6) *freedom*; (7) *equality*; and (8) *responsiveness*. Diamond and Morlino (2004, p. 22) further state: “The multidimensional nature of our framework, and of the growing number of democracy assessments that are being conducted, implies a pluralist notion of democratic quality.” These eight dimensions distinguish themselves conceptually with regards to procedure, content as well as results as the basis (conceptual quality basis) to be used in differentiating the quality of democracy (see Diamond and Morlino, 2004, pp. 21-22; 2005; see also Campbell and Barth, 2009, pp. 212-213). The “eight dimensions” of Diamond and Morlino may be interpreted as “Secondary Dimensions” of democracy and the quality of democracy for the purpose of democracy measurement (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Dimensions (Secondary Dimensions) for the Measurement of Democracy and the Quality of Democracy (Part A).



Source: Authors' own conceptualization and visualization based on Dahl (1975), Diamond and Morlino (2004, pp. 20-31; 2005) and Campbell (2008, p. 26).

Figure 3: Dimensions (Secondary Dimensions) for the Measurement of Democracy and the Quality of Democracy (Part B).



Source: Authors' own conceptualization and visualization based on Dahl (1975), Diamond and Morlino (2004, pp. 20-31; 2005) and Campbell (2008, p. 26).

“Earlier debates were strongly influenced by a dichotomous understanding that democracies stood in contrast to non-democracies” (Campbell and Barth, 2009, p. 210). However, with the quantitative expansion and spreading of democratic regimes, it is more importance to differentiate between the qualities of different democracies.⁶ Democracies themselves are subject to further development, which is a continuous process and does not finish upon its establishment. Democracies have to find answers and solutions to new challenges and possible problems. Democracies are in constant need to find and re-invent themselves. Observed over time, different scenarios could take place and could keep a democracy quality going on constantly, democracy quality could erode, but also improve. *A betterment of the quality of democracy should be the ultimate aim of a democracy. Earlier ideas about an electoral democracy are becoming outdated and will not suffice in today’s era.*

Gillermo O’Donnell (2004a) developed a broad theoretical understanding of democracy and the quality of democracy. In his theoretical approach, quality of democracy develops itself further through an interaction between human development and human rights: “True, in its origin the concept of human development focused mostly on the social and economic context, while the concept of human rights focused mostly on the legal system and on the prevention and redress of state violence” (O’Donnell, 2004a, p. 12). The human rights differentiate themselves in civil rights, political rights and social rights, in which O’Donnell (2004a, p. 47) assumes and adopts the classification of T. H. Marshall (1964). Human development prompts “...what may be, at least, a minimum set of conditions, or capabilities, that enable human beings to function in ways appropriate to their condition as such beings” (O’Donnell, 2004a, p. 12), therefore in accordance with human dignity and, moreover, the possibility of participating realistically in political processes within a democracy. O’Donnell also refers directly to the *Human Development Reports* with the *Human Development Index (HDI)* that are being released and published annually by the United Nations

⁶) According to Freedom House (2011b), in the year 1980 no less than 42.5% of the world population lived in “not free” political contexts. By 2010, this share dropped to 35.4%.

Development Program (UNDP).⁷ Explicitly, Gillermo O’Donnell (2004a, pp. 11-12) points out: “The concept of human development that has been proposed and widely diffused by UNDP’s *Reports* and the work of Amartya Sen was a reversal of prevailing views about development. ... The concept asks how every individual is doing in relation to the achievement of ‘the most elementary capabilities, such as living a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and enjoying a decent standard of living’” (O’Donnell, 2004a, pp. 11-12; UNDP, 2000, p. 20). *If the implementation of O’Donnell is reflected upon the initial questions asked in this contribution for the conceptualization of democracy and the quality of democracy, it can be interpreted, but also convincingly argued that “sustainable development” can be suggested as an additional dimension (“Basic Dimension”) for democracy, which would be important for the quality of democracy in a global perspective.*⁸ As a result of the distinction between dimensions (basic dimensions) for democracy and the quality of democracy, the following proposition is put up for debate: in addition to the dimensions of *freedom, equality and control* as being suggested by Lauth (2004, pp. 32-101), *the dimension of sustainable development should be introduced as a fourth dimension* (see again Figure 1). Regarding suggestions for defining sustainable development, Verena Winiwarter and Martin Knoll (2007, pp. 306-307) commented: “In the meantime, as described, multiple definitions for sustainability exist. A fundamental distinction within the definition lies in the question whether only the relation of society with nature or if additionally social and economic factors should be considered.”

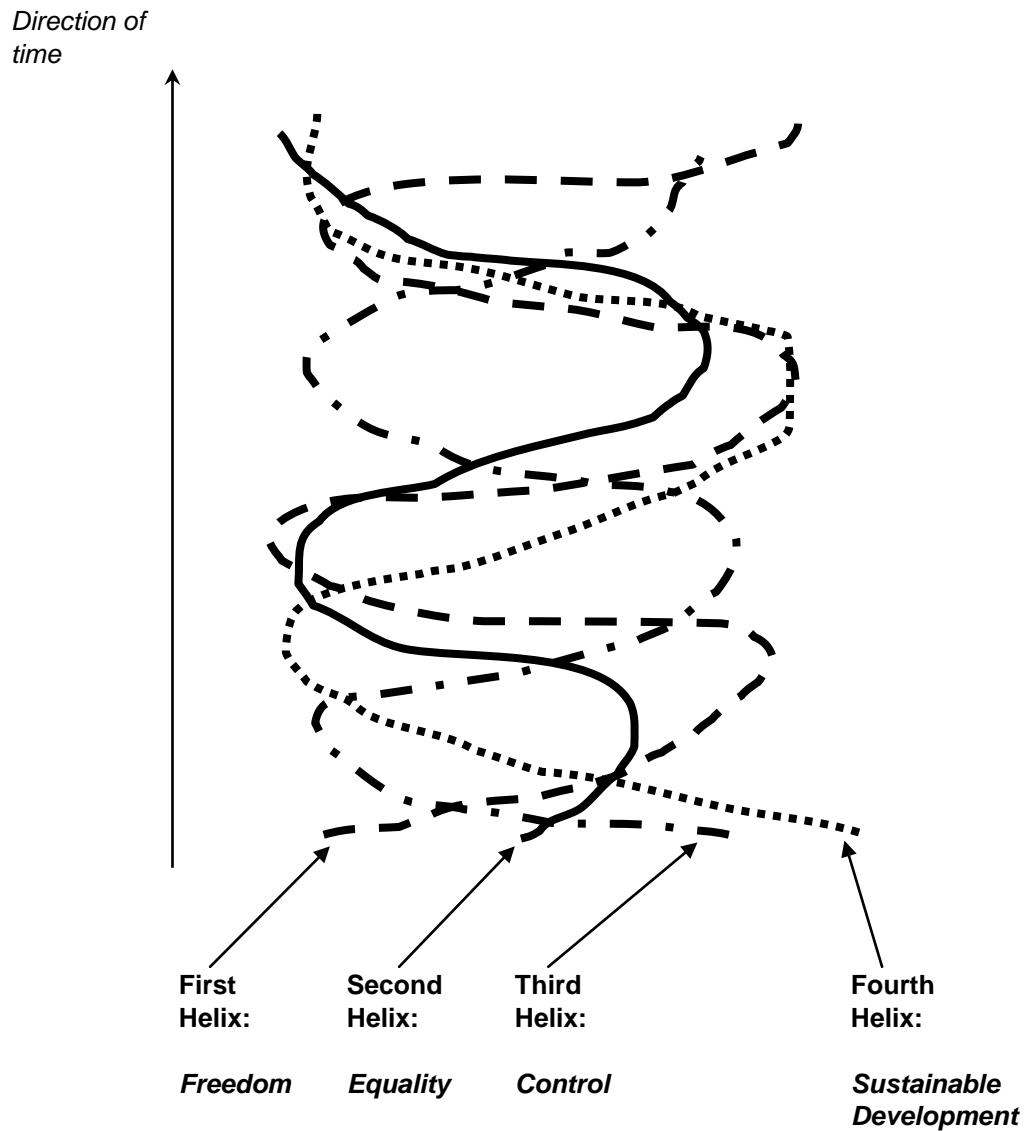
There are different theories, conceptual approaches and models for knowledge production and innovation systems. In the Triple Helix model of innovation, Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000, p. 112) developed a conceptual architecture for innovation, where they tie together the three helices of academia (higher education), industry (business) and state (government). This conceptual approach was extended by Carayannis and Campbell (2009; 2012, p. 14) in the so-called Quadruple Helix model of

⁷) For a comprehensive website address for all *Human Development Reports* that is publicly accessible for free downloads, see: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/>

⁸) For a systematic attempt of empirical assessment on possible linkages between democracy and development, see Przeworski et al. (2003).

innovation systems by adding as a fourth helix the “media-based and culture-based public” as well as “civil society”. *The Quadruple Helix, therefore, is broader than the Triple Helix, and contextualizes the Triple Helix*, by interpreting Triple Helix as a core model that is being embedded in and by the more comprehensive Quadruple Helix. *Furthermore, the next-stage model of the Quintuple Helix model of innovation contextualizes the Quadruple Helix, by bringing in a further new perspective by adding additionally the “natural environment” (natural environments) of society.* The Quintuple Helix represents a “five-helix model”, “where the environment or the natural environments represent the fifth helix” (Carayannis and Campbell 2010, p. 61). In trying to emphasize, compare and contrast the focuses of those different Helix innovation models, we can assert that the Triple Helix concentrates on the knowledge economy, the Quadruple Helix on knowledge society and knowledge democracy, while the Quintuple Helix refers to socio-ecological transitions and the natural environments (Carayannis, Barth and Campbell, 2012, p. 4; see also Carayannis and Campbell, 2011). *For explaining and comparing democracy and the quality of democracy we proposed a “Quadruple-dimensional structure” of four different “basic dimensions” of democracy that are being called freedom, equality, control, and sustainable development* (Figure 1 offers a visualization on these). Here, we actually may draw a line of comparison between concepts and models in the theorizing on democracy and democracy quality and the theorizing on knowledge production and innovation systems. This also opens up a window of opportunity for an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaching of democracy as well as of knowledge production and innovation. *In conceptual terms, the Quadruple dimensional structure of democracy could also be re-arranged (re-architected) in reference to helices, by this creating a “Model of Quadruple Helix Structures” for democracy and the quality of democracy.* The metaphor and visualization in reference to terms of *helices* emphasizes the fluid and dynamic interaction, overlap and co-evolution of the individual dimensions of democracy. As basic dimensions for democracy we propose (proposed) to identify freedom, equality, control, and sustainable development. Figure 4 introduces a possible visualization from a helix perspective for a theoretical framing of democracy.

Figure 4: The Quadruple Helix Structure of the Basic Dimensions of Democracy and the Quality of Democracy.



Source: Authors' own conceptualization based on Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000, p. 112), Carayannis and Campbell (2012, p. 14), Danilda et al. (2009), Campbell (2008, p. 32) and for the dimension of "control" on Lauth (2004, pp. 32-101).

As already mentioned, equality is often associated closer with left-wing political positions and freedom with right-wing positions. *A measure of*

performance of political and non-political dimensions in relation to sustainable development has the advantage (especially in the case where sustainable development is understood comprehensively) that this procedure is mostly (often) left/right neutral. Such a measure of performance as a basis of the assessment of democracy and quality of democracy offers an additional reference point (“meta-reference point”) outside of usual ideologically-based conflict positions (Campbell, 2008, pp. 30-32). It can be argued in a similar manner that the dimension of control mentioned by Lauth (2004, pp. 77-96) positions itself as left-right neutral as well. The definition developed by the “Democracy Ranking” for the quality of democracy is: “Quality of Democracy = (freedom & other characteristics of the political system) & (performance on the nonpolitical dimensions)”. The definition is interpreted as a further empirical operationalization step and as a practical application for the measurement of democracy and the quality of democracy respectively which is based on the theory about the quality of democracy by Guillermo O’Donnell. However, the conceptual democracy formula of the Democracy Ranking has been developed independently (Campbell and Sükösd, 2002).

Several global initiatives already exist that commit themselves to regular empirical democracy measurement.⁹ The works of Freedom House (see, for example Gastil, 1993) and of the Democracy Ranking shall be elaborated in more detail during the analysis of the quality of democracy in the United States and in Austria. Other initiatives (without claiming entirety) include: Vanhanen’s Index of Democracy¹⁰ (Vanhanen, 2000); Polity IV¹¹; Democracy Index¹² (EIU, 2010); and the Democracy Barometer¹³ (Bühlmann et al., 2011) (for a comparison of different initiatives, see Pickel and Pickel, 2006, pp. 151-277; and Campbell and Barth, 2009, pp. 214-218). The Democracy Barometer provides a “Concept Tree”

⁹) It cannot be convincingly argued that there are no data or indicators for a comparative measurement of democracy (at least in the recent years). Of course there can and should be discussions about the quality of these data and their cross-references to theory of democracy.

¹⁰) See: <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Governance/Vanhanens-index-of-democracy>

¹¹) See: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>

¹²) See: http://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=demo2010

¹³) See: <http://www.democracybarometer.org/>

(“*Konzeptbaum*”) for the quality of democracy which also consists of the three dimensions of freedom, control and equality: “The Democracy Barometer assumes that democracy is guaranteed by the three principles of Freedom, Control and Equality”.¹⁴ A strong resemblance with the three (basic) dimensions of democracy by Lauth (2004, pp. 32-101) is evident in which the talk is also about equality, freedom and control (Figure 1).

The *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (International IDEA)¹⁵, established in Stockholm, Sweden, dedicated itself to the approach of the *Democratic Audit* by assessing the quality of democracy. IDEA uses its own *State of Democracy (SoD) Assessment Framework* for this purpose which is built on the following two principles: “popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers”; and “equality of respect and voice between citizens in the exercise of that control” (IDEA, 2008, p. 23). This framework is understood as a further level of operationalization for the democracy assessment of such concepts developed by David Beetham. Beetham (1994, p. 30) argues that a “complete democratic audit” has to cover the following areas: “free and fair elections”; “civil and political rights”; “a democratic society”; and “open and accountable government”. Beetham has been successively involved in various Democratic Audit Processes in the United Kingdom (see, for example Beetham et al., 2002), and moreover (at least for the further conceptual development) he is also committed with IDEA (see again IDEA, 2008). The Assessment Framework of IDEA for democracy evaluation has been applied to 21 countries since 2000, however excluding Austria, Germany and Switzerland.¹⁶

To summarize the current stance of research and studies regarding the quality of democracy of Austria, the mid-1990s provide a useful starting-point. The “*Die Qualität der österreichischen Demokratie*” (*Quality of Democracy in Austria*, by Campbell et al., 1996) represented the first attempt to analyze the Austrian quality of democracy, at least from an

¹⁴) The original quote in German is: “Das Democracy Barometer geht davon aus, dass Demokratie durch die drei Prinzipien Freiheit, Kontrolle und Gleichheit sichergestellt wird.” See: http://www.democracybarometer.org/concept_de.html

¹⁵) See: <http://www.idea.int/>

¹⁶) For an overview see: <http://www.idea.int/sod/worldwide/reports.cfm>

academic (and sciences-based) point of view. The next, once again systematic approach of evaluation of the Austrian quality of democracy took place in the “*Demokratiequalität in Österreich*” (*Quality of Democracy in Austria*, by Campbell and Schaller, 2002).¹⁷ In an exclusive chapter contribution from this volume, an attempt was made to understand or to position the quality of democracy of Austria interactively between basic rights or human rights (“*Grundrechten*”)¹⁸ on one hand and power-balancing structures (“*Macht-ausbalancierenden Strukturen*”)¹⁹ on the other (Campbell, 2002, p. 19). Later studies have already started preferring a comparative approach (see Beck and Schaller, 2003; Fröschl et al., 2008; Barth, 2010 and 2011).

3. The Quality of Democracy in the United States and in Austria in a Comparative Perspective with the OECD Countries (EU27): A Comparative Empirical View of the American and Austrian Democracy Relating to the Dimensions of Freedom, Equality, Control, and Sustainable Development

The following session validates the quality of democracy in the United States and in Austria through empirical indicators by providing a comparative approach and analysis in order to create a platform to discuss the propositions for assessing and analyzing American and Austrian quality of democracy (as is being attempted finally in Section 4). Assessment, even more importantly *evaluation*, is being used here less to provide factual statements, but rather more as a stimulant for discussion and to search for possibilities to improve democracy. Evaluation is therefore meant to provoke *democracy learning* (“*Demokratielernen*”). The benchmark for comparison covers all the member states of the OECD, complemented by

¹⁷) In the meantime, this book already can be downloaded for free as a whole and complete PDF from the web. Visit the following links at: http://www.oegpw.at/sek_agora/publikationen.htm and <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/View/?resid=12473>

¹⁸) “*Grundrechte*” here may be interpreted as *human rights* as they are being proposed by Guillermo O’Donnell (2004a, pp. 12, 47).

¹⁹) In reference to the already mentioned basic dimensions of democracy and the quality of democracy, the power-balancing-structures (“*Macht-ausbalancierenden Strukturen*” or “*Macht-ausgleichenden Strukturen*”) may be aligned to the dimension of control (see Lauth, 2004, pp. 77-96).

the remaining member states of the EU27. The chosen time frame is always the last year with available data information (as of early 2012), usually extracted from the year 2010.²⁰ Only available indicators were used and no new indicators were created. *This emphasized and emphasizes to refer to already existing knowledge.* Indicators being used are from such institutions (organizations) that have a relatively “impartial” (“nonpartisan”) reputation, but also reflect a certain consensual “mainstream” point of view. Possible critical findings weigh even more for this particular reason. That should also underline that the OECD countries have been well documented regarding indicators over a longer period of time (which does not deny the need for new and even better indicators). *In order to support a comparative analysis and view, all the indicators have been re-scaled on a rating spectrum from 0-100, in which “0” indicates the worst possible (theoretically and/or empirically) and “100” the best empirical value of measurement for the interpretation of democracy and quality of democracy (in the specific context of our forty-country-sample here).*²¹ Results of that re-scaling are being represented in Table 1. Data in Table 2 are arranged somewhat differently: there, the highest observed empirical value still is 100; “0”, however, is not the lowest possible value, but the lowest empirically observed value.²² Mean values in Table 1 and Table 2 are not weighted by population. Concerning acronyms, being used in Table 1 and 2, see the explanation in the attached footnote.²³ The comparison is based on a total of eleven indicators, in which the majority (more or less) fits nicely or at least convincingly into the four identified (basic) dimensions of democracy (see Figure 1 in Section 2). Such a broad indicator spectrum is used for an attempt “to determine a multi-layered quality profile of democracies”, and could thus help, as put up for discussion by Hans-Joachim Lauth (2011, p. 49), to develop “qualitative or complex approaches

²⁰) Partially, in the following Tables 1 and 2, we had to estimate, to which calendar year a specific index year referred to.

²¹) For the process of re-scaling the freedom of press and the Gini coefficient we therefore had to shift reversely the value direction of the primary data, to make values (data) compatible with the other indicators.

²²) Therefore, put in contrast, a comparison of the indicators in Table 1 and 2 should allow for a better and more nuanced interpretation of the different countries and their quality of democracy (OECD, EU27).

²³) Acronyms in Table 1 and 2 have the following meaning: U.S. = United States; and UK = United Kingdom.

for democracy measurement”. In the subsequent Tables 1 and 2, the empirical results are provided and in what follows, the exact sources of indicators are being displayed and presented:

1. *The dimension of freedom:* For this, *political rights, civil liberties and freedom of press* are used as indicators as drawn up yearly by the Freedom House (2011c and 2011d). Civil liberties play an important role, as they help allocate systems between primary *electoral democracies* and *liberal democracies* (with a higher quality of democracy). For political rights and civil liberties, the differentiated “aggregate and subcategory scores” are accessed. In some cases, controversial discussions take place concerning the reliability of Freedom House. But it appears that the methodology being used by Freedom House in the previous years has improved and Freedom House operates through a peer-review-process that corresponds to the basic academic standards (Freedom House, 2011a). Also, the Freedom House data related to OECD countries are less problematic than the data available regarding non-OECD countries. Moreover, Freedom House rates freedom in multiple countries as higher than that prevailing in the United States itself (see also the discussion by Pickel and Pickel, 2006, p. 221). Additionally, data from the *Index of Economic Freedom* have been added (Heritage Foundation, 2011). Regarding economic freedom, there appears to be a conflict or dilemma whether this should influence an evaluation measure (of freedom) of the quality of democracy.
2. *The dimension of equality:* The choice rests on two indicators in this case. Regarding gender equality, the *Global Gender Gap Index* is referred to, as is being published annually by the World Economic Forum (Hausmann et al., 2011). As a comprehensive measure for gender equality, it covers the following areas: “Economic Participation and Opportunity”; “Educational Attainment”; “Health and Survival”; and “Political Empowerment”. With respect to income equality, the *Social and Welfare Statistics* of the OECD (2011) are used for reference. Concerning distribution of income, we decided to employ the “Gini coefficient” for the total population (“after taxes and

transfers”, as the respective OECD source indicates; OECD, 2011).²⁴ The Gini coefficient is also known as the “Gini index”.

3. *The dimension of control: The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)* is used in this regard, which is published yearly by Transparency International (TI, 2011). The CPI aggregates different opinion surveys and ranks countries according to the perceived level of corruption in a country. Corruption is (indirectly) used as an interpretation tool to measure the extent as to which the dimension of control is functioning (or not). The higher the values (data) for the Corruption Perceptions Index in the Tables 1 and 2, the lower are the levels of perceived corruption.

4. *The dimension of sustainable development: The first choice rests on the Human Development Index (HDI)*, which is published regularly by the United Nations Organization (UNDP, 2011). The HDI is calculated using the following dimensions: “Long and healthy life”, “Knowledge”, and “A decent standard of living”. The HDI therefore measures *human development*, which is one of the two basic principles that combine together with *human rights* to provide and explain the theoretical foundation and theoretical architecture of Guillermo O’Donnell (2004a) regarding the quality of democracy. As a second indicator, the aggregated “total scores” of the Democracy Ranking (2011) are considered. The *Democracy Ranking 2011* calculates the average means for the years 2009-2010 and aggregates the different dimensions in the following way (Campbell, 2008, p. 34): *politics* 50%, and 10% each for *gender*, *economy*, *knowledge*, *health*, and *environment*.²⁵ Thereby, the Democracy Ranking defines and analyses sustainable development even more comprehensively than the HDI (Human Development Index). The “...*Democracy Ranking displays what happens when the freedom ratings of Freedom House and the Human Development Index of the United Nations*

²⁴) Concerning the Gini coefficient (re-scaled as income equality) in the Tables 1 and 2, we interpreted 2009 as the approximate year of reference for the calendar year. The OECD online data base (OECD, 2011) speaks in this respect of the “Late 2000s”.

²⁵) See also: <http://www.democracyranking.org/en/>

Development Program are being pooled together into a comprehensive picture”(Campbell, 2011, p. 3).

5. *Other indicators:* Two indicators of the *Migrant Integration Policy Index* (MIPEX) are adopted in comparing the quality of democracy (Huddleston et al., 2011): The “overall score (with education)” as well as the “access to nationality”. This index therefore measures the integration of immigrants and non-citizens respectively in a society and democracy. At first glance, it is not completely clear in which aforementioned dimensions (freedom, equality, control, and sustainable development) should the MIPEX be allocated. The possibility of multiple allocations is conceivable.

Table 1: Quality of Democracy of the United States (U.S.) in Comparison (Part A).

	Political Rights (2010)	Civil Liberties (2010)	Freedom of Press (2010)	Economic Freedom (2010)	Gender Equality (2010)	Income Equality (2009)	Corruption Perceptions Index (2010)	Human Development Index (2010)	Democracy Ranking (2009-2010)	Migrant Integration Policy Index (2010)	MIPEX: Access to Nationality (2010)
Australia	97.50	95.00	87.78	100.00	85.30	86.91	93.54	98.50	90.02	81.93	93.90
Austria	97.50	96.67	87.78	87.15	83.81	96.73	84.93	93.78	90.48	50.60	26.82
Belgium	97.50	96.67	97.78	85.09	88.15	96.99	76.32	93.89	90.25	80.72	84.14
Bulgaria	87.50	78.33	72.22	78.66	81.70		38.64	81.56	72.25	49.39	29.26
Canada	100.00	98.33	90.00	97.94	86.68	88.48	95.69	96.25	90.37	86.75	90.24
Czech Republic	95.00	95.00	90.00	85.33	79.35	97.38	49.41	91.64	80.39	55.42	40.24
Chile	97.50	96.67	78.89	93.82	82.21	66.23	77.40	85.21	81.31		
Cyprus	95.00	93.33	86.67	88.85	76.71		67.71	88.96	80.62	42.16	39.02
Denmark	100.00	95.00	96.67	95.27	91.08	98.43	100.00	94.86	94.61	63.85	40.24
Estonia	97.50	93.33	91.11	91.15	81.65	89.66	69.86	88.42	81.54	55.42	19.50
Finland	100.00	100.00	100.00	89.70	98.26	96.99	98.92	93.46	97.25	83.13	69.51
France	95.00	95.00	85.56	78.30	82.06	92.54	73.09	93.68	86.24	61.44	71.95
Germany	97.50	95.00	92.22	87.03	88.85	92.28	84.93	95.93	91.63	68.67	71.95
Greece	90.00	83.33	77.78	73.09	80.85	90.71	37.57	91.21	78.90	59.03	69.51
Hungary	92.50	88.33	77.78	80.72	77.60	95.29	50.48	86.39	77.29	54.21	37.80
Iceland	100.00	98.33	97.78	82.66	100.00	91.49	91.39	95.18			
Ireland	97.50	96.67	93.33	95.39	91.70	92.54	86.01	96.25	91.74	59.03	70.73
Israel	90.00	78.33	78.89	83.03	80.97	82.33	65.55	94.11	82.45		
Italy	92.50	86.66	73.33	73.09	79.43	86.78	41.87	92.60	80.28	72.29	76.83
Japan	92.50	85.00	87.78	88.24	76.09	87.83	83.85	95.50	83.83	45.78	40.24
Korea	90.00	83.33	75.56	84.60	73.32	89.66	58.02	95.07	79.36		
Latvia	82.50	86.66	82.22	79.76	86.58		46.18	85.21	77.64	37.34	18.28
Lithuania	92.50	88.33	86.67	86.42	83.40		53.71	85.74	79.70	48.19	24.38
Luxembourg	100.00	100.00	97.78	92.36	84.41	93.19	91.39	91.85		71.08	80.49
Malta	97.50	96.67	86.67	79.63	77.79		60.17	88.10		44.57	31.70
Mexico	72.49	61.66	42.22	82.18	77.15	68.59	33.26	81.46	63.88		
Netherlands	100.00	96.67	95.56	90.54	87.43	92.41	94.62	96.46	93.58	81.93	80.49
New Zealand	97.50	96.67	94.44	99.76	91.46	87.70	100.00	96.25	93.92		
Norway	100.00	100.00	98.89	85.21	98.51	98.17	92.47	100.00	100.00	79.52	49.99
Poland	95.00	91.67	83.33	77.69	82.30	90.97	56.94	86.07	79.70	50.60	42.68
Portugal	97.50	96.67	92.22	77.57	83.56	84.69	64.48	85.64	85.67	95.18	100.00
Romania	85.00	81.66	64.44	78.42	79.62		39.72	82.64	71.56	54.21	35.36
Slovak Republic	92.50	88.33	86.67	84.24	79.44	97.25	46.18	88.32	76.95	43.37	32.92
Slovenia	95.00	88.33	83.33	78.30	82.34	100.00	68.78	93.68	85.09	59.03	40.24
Spain	100.00	95.00	85.56	85.09	88.73	89.40	65.55	93.03	87.84	75.90	47.55
Sweden	100.00	100.00	98.89	87.15	94.23	96.99	98.92	95.82	98.85	100.00	96.34
Switzerland	97.50	95.00	96.67	99.27	89.29	91.23	93.54	95.71	96.56	51.80	43.90
Turkey	67.49	59.99	51.11	77.82	69.44	77.36	47.26	73.85	58.94		
U.S.	95.00	93.33	92.22	94.30	86.74	81.41	76.32	96.46	89.45	74.70	74.39
UK	100.00	95.00	90.00	90.30	87.33	85.73	81.70	91.43	90.48	68.67	71.95
Mean (unweighted)	94.25	91.00	85.69	86.13	84.39	89.83	70.91	91.25	84.61	63.81	55.83

Source: Authors' own re-scaling based on original sources (see text for source citation).

Scale range 0-100, 0 = lowest possible (theoretical and/or empirical) value, 100 = highest empirical value.

Table 2: Quality of Democracy of the United States (U.S.) in Comparison (Part B).

	Political Rights (2010)	Civil Liberties (2010)	Freedom of Press (2010)	Economic Freedom (2010)	Gender Equality (2010)	Income Equality (2009)	Corruption Perceptions Index (2010)	Human Development Index (2010)	Democracy Ranking (2009-2010)	Migrant Integration Policy Index (2010)	MIPEX: Access to Nationality (2010)
Australia	92.31	87.50	78.85	100.00	51.90	61.24	90.32	94.26	75.70	71.15	92.54
Austria	92.31	91.67	78.85	52.25	47.01	90.31	77.42	76.23	76.82	21.15	10.45
Belgium	92.31	91.67	96.15	44.59	61.22	91.09	64.52	76.64	76.26	69.23	80.60
Bulgaria	61.54	45.83	51.92	20.72	40.10		8.06	29.51	32.40	19.23	13.43
Canada	100.00	95.83	82.69	92.34	56.41	65.89	93.55	85.66	76.54	78.85	88.06
Czech Republic	84.62	87.50	82.69	45.50	32.41	92.25	24.19	68.03	52.23	28.85	26.87
Chile	92.31	91.67	63.46	77.03	41.77	0.00	66.13	43.44	54.47		
Cyprus	84.62	83.33	76.92	58.56	23.80		51.61	57.79	52.79	7.69	25.37
Denmark	100.00	87.50	94.23	82.43	70.81	95.35	100.00	80.33	86.87	42.31	26.87
Estonia	92.31	83.33	84.62	67.12	39.95	69.38	54.84	55.74	55.03	28.85	1.49
Finland	100.00	100.00	100.00	61.71	94.29	91.09	98.39	75.00	93.30	73.08	62.69
France	84.62	87.50	75.00	19.37	41.30	77.91	59.68	75.82	66.48	38.46	65.67
Germany	92.31	87.50	86.54	51.80	63.51	77.13	77.42	84.43	79.61	50.00	65.67
Greece	69.23	58.33	61.54	0.00	37.34	72.48	6.45	66.39	48.60	34.62	62.69
Hungary	76.92	70.83	61.54	28.38	26.71	86.05	25.81	47.95	44.69	26.92	23.88
Iceland	100.00	95.83	96.15	35.59	100.00	74.81	87.10	81.56			
Ireland	92.31	91.67	88.46	82.88	72.83	77.91	79.03	85.66	79.89	34.62	64.18
Israel	69.23	45.83	63.46	36.94	37.73	47.67	48.39	77.46	57.26		
Italy	76.92	66.67	53.85	0.00	32.69	60.85	12.90	71.72	51.96	55.77	71.64
Japan	76.92	62.50	78.85	56.31	21.74	63.95	75.81	82.79	60.61	13.46	26.87
Korea	69.23	58.33	57.69	42.79	12.69	69.38	37.10	81.15	49.72		
Latvia	46.15	66.67	69.23	24.77	56.09		19.35	43.44	45.53	0.00	0.00
Lithuania	76.92	70.83	76.92	49.55	45.69		30.65	45.49	50.56	17.31	7.46
Luxembourg	100.00	100.00	96.15	71.62	48.99	79.84	87.10	68.85		53.85	76.12
Malta	92.31	91.67	76.92	24.32	27.33		40.32	54.51		11.54	16.42
Mexico	15.38	4.17	0.00	33.78	25.23	6.98	0.00	29.10	12.01		
Netherlands	100.00	91.67	92.31	64.86	58.85	77.52	91.94	86.48	84.36	71.15	76.12
New Zealand	92.31	91.67	90.38	99.10	72.05	63.57	100.00	85.66	85.20		
Norway	100.00	100.00	98.08	45.05	95.11	94.57	88.71	100.00	100.00	67.31	38.81
Poland	84.62	79.17	71.15	17.12	42.08	73.26	35.48	46.72	50.56	21.15	29.85
Portugal	92.31	91.67	86.54	16.67	46.20	54.65	46.77	45.08	65.08	92.31	100.00
Romania	53.85	54.17	38.46	19.82	33.31		9.68	33.61	30.73	26.92	20.90
Slovak Republic	76.92	70.83	76.92	41.44	32.73	91.86	19.35	55.33	43.85	9.62	17.91
Slovenia	84.62	70.83	71.15	19.37	42.20	100.00	53.23	75.82	63.69	34.62	26.87
Spain	100.00	87.50	75.00	44.59	63.12	68.60	48.39	73.36	70.39	61.54	35.82
Sweden	100.00	100.00	98.08	52.25	81.13	91.09	98.39	84.02	97.21	100.00	95.52
Switzerland	92.31	87.50	94.23	97.30	64.95	74.03	90.32	83.61	91.62	23.08	31.34
Turkey	0.00	0.00	15.38	17.57	0.00	32.95	20.97	0.00	0.00		
U.S.	84.62	83.33	86.54	78.83	56.60	44.96	64.52	86.48	74.30	59.62	68.66
UK	100.00	87.50	82.69	63.96	58.54	57.75	72.58	67.21	76.82	50.00	65.67
Mean (unweighted)	82.31	77.50	75.24	48.46	48.91	69.89	56.41	66.56	62.52	42.25	45.95

Source: Authors' own re-scaling based on original sources (see text for source citation).

Scale range 0-100, 0 = lowest empirical value, 100 = highest empirical value.

4. Conclusion: Comparative Assessment and Evaluation of the Quality of Democracy in the United States and in Austria and Measures for Improving the Quality of Democracy of Austria

The following central research question coined the analytical procedure of this paper: *to compare the quality of democracy in the United States and in Austria internationally and to “assess” (evaluate) it.* For this particular reason, American (U.S.) and Austrian democracy were put in reference to the OECD countries (EU27) with 2010 as the main year in focus. Theoretically, four basic dimensions (freedom, equality, control, and sustainable development) were derived conceptually and allocated to eleven empirical indicators. Table 1 and Table 2 (in Section 3) present the relevant empirical evidence. The main concern is to provide an attempt for the evaluation of American and Austrian quality of democracy through a comparative perspective. In the following, we provide a first assessment for the quality of democracy in the United States, based on the empirical data that is strictly and consistently comparative in nature and character, and put forward first propositions. Afterwards, we focus in greater detail on the quality of Austrian democracy, and engage there also in the formulation of recommendations for democracy quality improvement. *In theoretical and conceptual terms, we referred to a Quadruple dimensional structure, also a Quadruple Helix structure (a “Model of Quadruple Helix Structures”) of the four basic dimensions of freedom, equality, control, and sustainable development, for explaining and comparing democracy and the quality of democracy.*

For the comparative assessment of the quality of democracy in the United States we can put forward the following tentative propositions. The U.S. ranks highest on the Human Development Index (dimension of sustainable development) and on political rights, economic freedom, civil liberties, and freedom of press (all dimension of freedom).²⁶ Concerning the dimension of equality, the scoring of the United States is not that good anymore. With

²⁶) Interestingly, with regard to political rights and civil liberties, the U.S. ranks behind Austria.

regard to gender equality, the U.S. positions itself slightly above OECD average, but concerning income equality, the U.S. performs clearly below OECD average. Concerning the perceived corruption, we asserted that this indicator could be assigned to the dimension of control. In reference to the Corruption Perceptions Index, the United States scores higher (meaning to have less perceived corruption) than the OECD average, but behind several of the more developed OECD countries.²⁷ Concerning the data of the Democracy Ranking 2011 (dimension of sustainable development), the U.S. performs clearly above the OECD average.²⁸ On the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), the United States also scores above OECD average.²⁹ *Put in summary, we may conclude: the comparative strengths of the quality of democracy in the United States focus on the dimension of freedom and on the dimension of sustainable development. Further containment of corruption marks potentially a sensitive area and issue for the U.S. The comparative weakness of the quality of American democracy lies in the dimension of equality, most importantly income equality. Income inequality defines and represents a major challenge and concern for democracy in the United States.*

In the following, we want to focus now in more detail on Austrian democracy. For an assessment (evaluation) of the quality of democracy in Austria, we set up for discussion the following propositions in context of a thesis-formulation:

1. *Comparatively, Austria's quality of democracy yields good results in: political rights and civil liberties (dimension of freedom), income equality (dimension of equality), and within both indicators for the dimension of sustainable development.*
2. *Comparatively, Austria's quality of democracy yields less good results in: freedom of press and economic freedom (dimension of freedom),*

²⁷) Levels of corruption are being perceived to be higher in the U.S. than in Austria.

²⁸) In the Democracy Ranking 2011, Austrian democracy scores higher than the United States.

²⁹) On migrant integration policy, Austria scores dramatically lower than the U.S.

gender equality (dimension of equality), and corruption (dimension of control).

3. *Comparatively, Austria's quality of democracy yields lower-ranking results in:* Both indicators used in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) show a problematic positioning. Austria's comprehensive rank in the MIPEX is only 26 (out of 33)³⁰, and in the category of access to citizenship, Austria ranks only 30 (out of 33)³¹ (see Table 1 and Table 2). However, in relation to this observation, it must be noted that the poor performance of Austria in the MIPEX is not negatively reflected by the Freedom House's freedom rating in the category of political rights and civil liberties. One proposition would be that the integration of foreigners and of non-citizens (but being born and living exactly in the country, where they are) is not given enough weight (by Freedom House).

*The comparative strengths and weaknesses of the Austrian quality of democracy blend themselves differently along the dimensions of freedom and equality. Regarding sustainable development, Austria's quality of democracy finds itself ranked highly and its position remains robust. Taking the ratings of the Democracy Ranking during the years 2009 and 2010 under consideration (Democracy Ranking, 2011), countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland find themselves worldwide on top in the category of sustainable development. Therefore, currently, the Nordic countries provide the global empirical benchmark for democracy development (for a comprehensive and sustainable democracy development). The Nordic countries have impressively demonstrated the level-for-the-quality-of-democracy that is empirically already possible to achieve.*³²

³⁰) Here are behind Austria only Bulgaria, Lithuania, Japan, Malta, the Slovak Republic, Cyprus, and Latvia.

³¹) Here, only Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia perform poorer than Austria.

³²) *"The Nordic democracies (and Switzerland) demonstrate in empirical terms and in practice, which degrees and levels of a quality of democracy already can be achieved at the beginning of the twenty-first century"* (Campbell, 2011, p. 6).

*As compared with the OECD countries, the quality of democracy in Austria is ranked high to very high, but not in all dimensions and for all indicators. Evidently, for the purpose of a further learning with respect to the quality of democracy in Austria (so the proposition), the identification of the potentially problematic areas appears to be relevant above all, since, naturally, those areas require democratic and political reform. In Austria, necessity for innovation and democracy innovation is drastically needed in freedom of press, gender equality and in fighting and containing corruption. However, the most urgent action plan for Austria's quality of democracy needs to be implemented particularly in the improvement of integration of immigrants and of non-EU citizens, and a better access to citizenship. Integration policy is also linked, interlinked and cross-linked with other policy fields such as asylum policy (Rosenberger, 2010). Austria's citizenship law knows no *jus soli*, but is directed and steered by a pure *jus sanguinis* policy. Automatic acquisition of Austrian citizenship still only takes place through the Austrian citizenship of the parents (*jus sanguinis*), whereas birth in Austria (*jus soli*), also residence during childhood and youth, are being completely ignored. Persons, who are not Austrian citizens, of course can always apply for Austrian citizenship (when specific conditions are being met and fulfilled), but this is something else than an automatic acquisition of citizenship. Therefore, descent (in essence also a biological principle) actually decides about political rights and automatic political participation in Austrian democracy.³³ This only can be hardly balanced with the developed quality standards of a democracy in the twenty-first century and, when given further thought, stands finally in contradiction to fairness and universal equality of people and the general application of human rights.³⁴ Reforms in citizenship law in other European*

³³) Here we can quote from an original source: "Bedenklich für Demokratiequalität ist, wenn ein bedeutender Anteil der Wohnbevölkerung nicht im Besitz der Staatsbürgerschaft ist beziehungsweise sich dieser Anteil sogar vergrößert: Denn das könnte dazu führen, dass manche Parteien, die an Wahlstimmenmaximierung interessiert sind, den StaatsbürgerInnen 'auf Kosten' der Nicht-StaatsbürgerInnen Wahlversprechen geben. ... Je größer der Anteil der Nicht-StaatsbürgerInnen, desto höher fällt das populistische Potenzial für den Parteienwettbewerb aus. Soll gegen Populismus ein effektiver Riegel vorgeschoben werden, müsste der Anteil der Nicht-StaatsbürgerInnen an der Wohnbevölkerung möglichst verringert werden" (Campbell, 2002, pp. 30-31).

³⁴) According to Pelinka (2008), there is a need in Austria for a more systematic conceptual reflection on the *demos*, in the sense of: "Who are the People?" ("Wer

countries (like Germany), in the recent years, did not enter into Austrian politics and were not taken up by the Austrian mainstream political discourses.³⁵

Finally, some possibilities for the betterment of the Austrian quality of democracy are to be sketched and presented for discussion:

1. *Citizenship*: The introduction of an equal and equitable *jus soli* component in Austrian citizenship law, parallel to the current *jus sanguinis* component, appears to be absolutely necessary. *Jus soli* would at least imply that a person, who has been born in Austria, is being regarded automatically as an Austrian citizen. Sufficient residence in years during childhood and youth may also be acknowledged. To address the possibility of dual and multiple citizenship, different scenarios are conceivable and naturally legitimate; there are, however, good arguments in favor of introducing and approving dual and multiple citizenship.
2. *Gender equality, freedom of the press, better integration of immigrants (non-EU citizens) and containment of corruption*: These are areas and policy fields of concern in which Austria does not position itself as well as we should expect. Reform of Austrian democracy should therefore focus more intensively on these “hot spot” topics and fields of policy application.³⁶
3. *Balancing of political power*: For Western Europe, Wolfgang C. Müller and Kaare Strøm (2000, p. 589) empirically enumerated and calculated the higher risk ruling parties are exposed to in upcoming

ist das Volk?”). This reflection should definitely encourage more inclusion (see also Valchars, 2006).

³⁵) Should Austrian politics continue the blocking of an introduction of a *jus soli* component into its citizenship law during the course of the coming years, then it cannot completely be ruled out that the pure *jus sanguinis* design will finally be challenged legally at a “constitutional court” (nationally, supranationally or even internationally).

³⁶) On the financing of politics and political parties in Austria see, for example: Sickinger (2009).

elections of losing, rather than maintaining their share of votes. That would, therefore, be a manifestation of the phenomenon of *government/opposition cycles* and of *political swings (left/right swings)* that occur regularly in democracies. A particular feature of the Austrian national parliament (“*Nationalrat*”) is the existence of a “right” mandate majority of center-right and right-wing parties since the parliamentary election of 1983. Conversely, it can be argued that possibly in reaction to the conservative federal governments (in coalition arrangements of ÖVP/FPÖ and ÖVP/BZÖ parties) on the federal level during the years 2000-2007³⁷, for the first time ever a “left” majority at the sub-federal provincial level resulted after 2005, when the political party composition of the nine provincial parliaments (“*Landtage*”) is being aggregated together and also is being weighted on the basis of population of these provinces (Campbell, 2007, pp. 392-393). The current continuation of grand center coalitions of the center-left social democrats (SPÖ) and the center-right conservatives (ÖVP) on the federal level suggests perhaps a starting erosion of the combined left majorities at the provincial level. For an improved political balance of power the possibilities and recommendations are: increased application of term-limits to political office (also for chancellors and heads of provincial governments, the governors); general elimination of automatic proportional representation of political parties in provincial governments based on the number of their mandates in the provincial parliaments (called in Austria “*Proporz*”); general introduction of direct popular elections of mayors, possibly also direct popular elections of the heads of provincial governments, i.e. the governors (paralleled by a re-arrangement of the current political balance of power on provincial level) (Campbell, 2007, p. 402).³⁸

4. *Referendums*: Should a public petition with a minimum number of signatures automatically be subjected to a referendum? (Should the

³⁷) For an analysis of the Austrian federal governments in these years, see: Winerither (2009).

³⁸) For a possible reform of the electoral law, see Klaus Poier (2001) and his considerations in favor of a “minority-friendly majority representation” (“*minderheitenfreundliches Mehrheitswahlrecht*”).

parliament, with a “qualified majority”, be able to object to it?) The following points speak against an increased application of referendums: politics (political cycles) would be too short-lived; blockade of further EU integration processes with an interest in deepening the European Union (by scapegoating EU policies at the national level); a populist abuse of certain political themes (for example: against immigrants). However, the fact that the national population or the voters would have the power to put forward a topic on the political agenda which may otherwise would be ignored by the ruling parties (or the parties in parliament), is a point that speaks in favor for the increased application of referendums. Therefore, the specific setting of a minimum number of signatures for a public petition would be an important decision. 250,000 signatures would probably not suffice. 640,000 signatures (around 10 percent of the voters in Austria) perhaps may be sufficient. This reference bar could also be raised higher though: for example, to 25 percent of the voters (Campbell, 2002, p. 39).

5. *Political education (civic education)*: In the Austrian education system (for instance the secondary school), political education (civic education) should be introduced comprehensively and uniformly as a distinct subject (“*Unterrichtsgegenstand*”). Political education would therefore let itself conceive as a form of “democratic education” and may be re-conceptualized as a “democracy education” (as well as be renamed this way?).
6. “*Democratic Audit*” of Austria: The political system of Austria, its democracy and quality of democracy, have so far not undergone a systematic *democratic audit*.³⁹ For this purpose, for example the procedure of IDEA could be used and applied (see IDEA, 2008;

³⁹) Attempts of the Austrian political science community, to convince Austrian politics and Austrian politicians to support such a democratic audit of Austria, were so far not successful.

Beetham, 1994). However, it would also be possible to hybridize or pool different procedures.⁴⁰

⁴⁰) For the interesting example of a democratic audit in Costa Rica, see Cullell (2004).

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