

Preface

This book is an outcome of a research program we started in 2004 at the University of Gothenburg, called “The Quality of Government Institute”. The purpose of The QoG Institute has been to promote research on the causes, consequences and nature of “good governance” and “quality of government” – which we broadly defined as trustworthy, reliable, impartial, uncorrupted and competent government institutions. There were many reasons why we decided to take this initiative. One was that we wanted to make political science research more relevant by focusing on the connection between the capacity and quality of government institutions that implemented public policies and what this meant for human well-being. Our suspicion was that dysfunctional government institutions were a major source of human suffering around the world – a hypothesis that, as shown in this volume, has been thoroughly confirmed. We also wanted to engage in a constructive dialogue with other social scientists, most of them in economics, who had become interested in the importance of “good governance”. However, just as war is often thought to be too serious a business to be left entirely in the hand of generals, we thought that what should constitute “good governance” ought not to be researched solely by our colleagues in economics.

The QoG Institute was quite a small operation when we started, consisting of we two, one researcher and one half-time assistant. Due to a large grant from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation in 2006, QoG is now an operation engaging about 20 researchers and a handful of PhD candidates. Additional funding has come from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Swedish Science Council, the European Union Directorate General for Regional Development, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research and the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation.

We would like to thank our collaborators in the QoG Team for joining us in this venture and for bringing along so much energy and creativity. We believe we have shown that the synergy effects generated from relatively large and coherent research groups focusing on a common theme that is often mentioned in the natural sciences, can also work in the social sciences. In particular, we would like to thank our research assistants and

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Over the years, The QoG Institute has benefited greatly from intellectual input from many colleagues around the world. In particular, we would like to thank Daniel Kaufmann at the World Bank Institute, Margaret Levi at the University of Washington in Seattle, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Pippa Norris at the United Nations Development Program and Harvard University, Elinor Ostrom at Indiana University and Eric Uslaner at the University of Maryland – College Park.

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