

Indicators as a Technology of Global Governance

1. Overview

An indicator may be defined as a named, rank-ordered representation of past or projected performance by different units (such as States, corporations, or persons) that uses numerical data to simplify more complex social phenomena, drawing on scientific expertise and methodologies. The production and use of indicators is now a widespread and multifaceted trend in contemporary global governance. Prominent indicators include the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings, the UNDP's Human Development Index, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, and the World Bank's Doing Business indicators, measuring the ease of doing business in different countries.

Indicators are produced by, or under the auspices of, a wide range of different organizations, from public actors to hybrid private-public institutions and purely private entities. Users include public international development agencies, national governmental agencies, global businesses and investors, NGOs, and various scientific and expert communities. Performance to a particular standard on an index may be mandatory, or necessary to receive benefits like donor funding, or may be pursued as a self-imposed target. The relationship between producers and users of indicators may vary over time, and there are many instances in which indicators produced by or for one entity are taken up by other actors and used in unforeseen ways.

Despite the widespread use of indicators, many questions remain about the nature of the phenomenon. The conceptual and analytical framework provided by global administrative law may help to answer those questions, and to examine the implications of, and problems posed by, the growing use of indicators.

Possible questions include: what social processes surround the creation and use of indicators? How does the process of creating indicators influence the kind of knowledge that they provide? Why and how do indicators work as a technology of global governance? Does the use of indicators change the nature of decision-making or the distribution of powers between those who govern and those who are governed? What are the needs that indicators are intended to meet? And are these needs satisfactorily fulfilled?

Indicators are used by public actors to provide a basis for evaluation, judgment or policy-making, thereby emerging as a peculiar form of public authority. At the same time, indicators may themselves represent a tool to hold governments accountable. The authority of indicators appears to be linked mainly to the scientific expertise on which they claim to be based, but what is the source of indicators' legitimacy? How can the legitimacy of indicators be assessed? Are their "producers" sufficiently accountable? Which indicators should be subjected to some form of additional control? What kinds of control (e.g. public or private) would be appropriate and feasible? Which would be the most suitable regulatory approach to solve possible conflicts? How can indicators improve global policies, and what is the role of developing countries in producing global indicators?

The 8th Global Administrative Law Seminar will focus on these issues, and on the overarching questions: Do we need a legal framework for addressing concerns related to the use of indicators as a technology of global governance? If so, what kind of legal framework: public or private, unitary or plural, binding or soft?

2. Provisional program

The seminar will be held on June 15-16, 2012. The Seminar Steering Committee includes Giulio Vesperini, Stefano Battini, Edoardo Chiti, Mario Savino, and Lorenzo Casini. The Seminar Organizing Team is made of Giulia Bertezolo, Eleonora Cavalieri, and Elisabetta Morlino.

The selected papers will constitute the basis for a thorough and wide-ranging discussion on the legal questions raised. As has been the case since the first GAL seminar in 2005, the best papers presented will be published in leading legal reviews and journals.

The overall aim of the Seminars is not only to assess the consistency of the analytic categories adopted to date, but also to develop more effective and forward-looking tools and technologies of global governance. To this end, legal counsel and leading practitioners will also participate in the seminar and act as discussants or commentators, together with leading academics in the field.

3. Call for papers

Submissions from both junior and senior scholars are invited on the themes outlined above. An abstract of 150-500 words should be sent (in .pdf or .doc format) to ViterboGalSeminar@gmail.com by **November 30, 2011**. Abstracts must include a statement of the issue area of the paper, as well as an indication of the major arguments to be made, a proposed title, and postal, email and telephone contacts for the author.

A selection panel will consider all abstracts received by the submission deadline, and notify applicants of paper acceptance by **January 31, 2012**. The submission date for full papers accepted for presentation is **May 10, 2012**. The final version of the paper must be no longer than 8,000 words (footnotes included) and must be sent (in .pdf or .doc format) to ViterboGalSeminar@gmail.com.

A .pdf version of this document is available at www.irpa.eu. For any further information please contact ViterboGalSeminar@gmail.com.

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