

POLITICS AND NUMBERS: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS

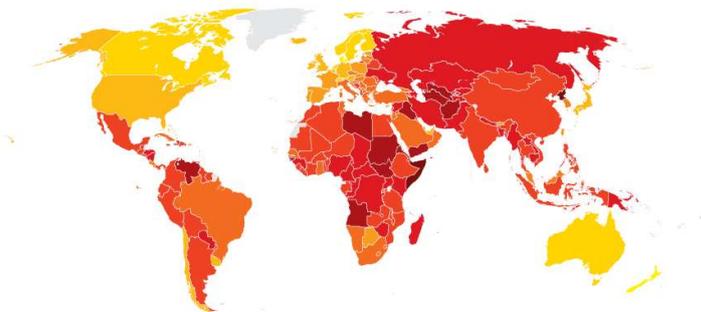
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IN A NUTSHELL

Politics and Numbers: Global Governance and Policy Instruments is an ongoing research venture at the Department of Political and Economic Studies, University of Helsinki. It is co-funded by the Academy of Finland (600 000€, 2013–2017) and the Network for European Studies (50 000€, 2013–2014).

The project explores **numerical objectification and its political implications in European and global governance.**



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CPI as an example of a global country ranking (Source: Transparency International)

BACKGROUND

Since the early 1990s there has been a **surge of global country rankings and governance indices.** These numbers are one of the mechanisms that play an ever more significant role in transforming political ideas into practice, thereby making transnational governance effective. **We analyse global governance from an instrumentally-oriented angle, seeing it as an ensemble of policy-relevant mechanisms embedded in institutional and normative power structures.**

Numbers ultimately define the scope of governing, since statistics are constructed entities upon which we can politicise, debate and make decisions. Numbers make new concepts of governing operable by bringing new issues to the fore and allowing them to become desired goals, guidelines or deficiencies of governing. However, numbers also narrow the room for debate.

Statistics are increasingly being produced in the international context for the purposes of supranational governance. Even though supranational actors such as the World Bank, the World Economic Forum or Transparency International do not pursue state-like sovereign power, their actions and the use of calculative technologies in defining issues of concern bear remarkable resemblance to historical attempts at making the modern state calculable.

Global rankings have become influential in steering the policy choices on national level. **The collection of global data is a strengthened manifestation of global governmentality,** where countries are seen to compete with each other in economic terms. In addition to examining the politics of numbers and their production, we are interested in how these mechanisms translate informal cooperation into formal regulation and institutional practices in Europe.

OBJECTIVES

Our primary objective is to explore various ways in which numbers obtain governance functions. The project explores numerical objectification and its political implications in European and global governance.

Our research sets out to examine:

- different types of numbers and measurement methods;
- the data producers, their roles, resources, motives and bases of authority;
- the various ways in which the governance function is played out;
- the political implications and regulative institutionalisation of numerical assessments.

We explore the **processes of production and use of global indices and rankings and their political significance and institutional impacts** in Europe and the world more generally.

SUB-PROJECTS

The project is divided into four subprojects, reflecting the areas of expertise of our researchers:

- 1) *Ranking Nations: Power, Competitiveness and Autonomy* (Ossi Piironen)
- 2) *Gender, Science and Demographic Governance* (Jemima Repo)
- 3) *Good Governance Indicators and State Traditions* (Tero Erkkilä & Ossi Piironen)
- 4) *Rankings and Structural Shifts in Higher Education Governance: Convergence or Divergence?* (Tero Erkkilä, Niilo Kauppi, James Mittelman & Ossi Piironen)

SEMINAR SERIES

The *Helsinki Seminar on Governance and Institutions* is an **interdisciplinary seminar series** that we launched in September 2013 in collaboration with the Finnish Centre of Excellence in the Foundations of European Law and Polity Research.

The seminar series is a forum where Finnish and international scholars can present and discuss their ongoing research on European, transnational and global governance as well as institutional analysis.

Welcome!



World Rank	Institution*	Country (Region)	National Rank	Total Score	Score on Alumni
1	Harvard University	USA	1	100	100
2	Stanford University	USA	2	72.1	41.8
3	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	USA	3	70.5	68.4
4	University of California-Berkeley	USA	4	70.1	66.8
5	University of Cambridge	UK	1	69.2	79.1
6	Princeton University	USA	5	60.7	52.1
7	California Institute of Technology	USA	6	60.5	48.5
8	Columbia University	USA	7	59.6	65.1
9	University of Chicago	USA	8	57.4	61.4
9	University of Oxford	UK	2	57.4	51
11	Yale University	USA	9	55.2	48.8
12	University of California, Los Angeles	USA	10	51.9	30.2
13	Cornell University	USA	11	50.6	37.6
14	University of California, San Diego	USA	12	49.3	19.7
15	University of Washington	USA	13	48.1	21.7

ARWU as an example of a global university ranking (Source: Shanghai Jiao Tong University)

More information: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/politicsandnumbers/>
<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/governanceandinstitutions/>