

T10P03 / How to Create Quantitatively Comparable Policy Measures

Topic : T10 / Methodologies

Chair : Jody Heymann (Fielding School of Public Health; WORLD Policy Analysis Center - University of California, Los Angeles)

Second Chair : DAVID Godfrey (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA)

Third Chair : Arijit Nandi (McGill University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The proposed panel seeks to achieve three key objectives:

- Identify innovative approaches to measuring quantitatively comparative law and policy data;
- Explore the merits of different methodologies to capture law and policy data in a comparative and accessible manner; and
- Highlight the challenges and promising practices in developing comparative quantitative databases on key law and policy issues.

To date, there have been few studies that have rigorously addressed the impact of national legislation on individual outcomes. The select studies that have ventured to explore policy have often relied on qualitative sources of data, which are rich but do not allow for rigorous quantitative research. One of the greatest impediments to this type of research that would enable a data-driven approach to improving outcomes has been the lack of comparable policy data. The inaccessibility of comparative legal and policy data has hampered our ability to systemically measure a) gaps in laws and policies that we know work to improve outcomes, b) progress over time in strengthening legal rights and protections, c) what policies have been feasible and effective in different economic settings, and d) which policies are most effective at improving individual and population outcomes.

When countries' laws and policies are captured in a quantitative and comparable format that can be used for analyses and is easily accessible to the public, it increases the transparency of countries' actions, or lack thereof, on issues that have been shown to impact outcomes. The research community also stands to benefit greatly from the proliferation of quantifiable comparable measures of comparative policy. Equipped with newly created rich datasets, researchers can undertake rigorous analyses linking policies to outcomes in order to determine which policies matter and which work best. This panel thus encourages researchers to present innovative efforts to create large quantitative databases of laws and policies at the sub-national, regional, and global levels.

Given its experience with pioneering an approach to creating quantitatively comparable policy data, the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD), at the University of California Los Angeles, is well placed to chair this panel. WORLD strives to improve the quantity and quality of globally comparative data on policies affecting human health, development, well-being, and equity. In this pursuit, WORLD has developed quantitatively comparable indicators measuring over 1,500 laws and policies on adult labor and working conditions, poverty, gender, health, education, equal rights and non-discrimination, children, and family in 193 countries.

The approach taken by WORLD is only one possible approach. WORLD is committed to working with groups who are creating public use data and bringing together those who are advancing innovative methodologies to capture quantitatively comparable policy data. In this spirit, this panel aims to highlight promising practices in developing comparative quantitative databases on key law and policy issues.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The inaccessibility of globally comparative legal and policy data has hampered our ability to measure countries' progress toward fulfilling their global commitments, evaluate progress over time, and determine what works. Quantitatively comparable data that enables us to monitor national actions around key international commitments such as the Paris climate change agreement can help strengthen accountability. Citizens are empowered to hold their leaders accountable for their actions or lack thereof in addressing the urgent problem of climate change. Policymakers are able to learn from the experiences of other countries to understand what policies have been feasible and effective in different economic or social settings and effective. Alongside the existing rich qualitative monitoring of human rights committees, quantitative measures of policy allow civil society and international

organizations to quickly see global progress, which countries are leading, and which countries are lagging behind. Similarly, quantitative data can be used to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals by identifying which policies are most effective at improving outcomes and where countries need to strengthen implementation of existing policies.

This panel invites researchers from a range of disciplines to explore new approaches to measuring policy data. Questions of particular interest are: What are the different ways in which we can translate the enormous amounts of qualitative law and policy data into quantitatively comparable databases? What are the constraints to developing such data? How do the challenges differ between creating sub-national, regional, and global comparative data? Submitted papers should present either innovative methodologies for measuring law and policy data or critical reflections on the process of translating qualitative policy data into comparable and actionable quantitative data.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 3 - 5)

Discussants

Jody Heymann (Fielding School of Public Health; WORLD Policy Analysis Center - University of California, Los Angeles)

DAVID Godfrey (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA)

Estimating the effect of compulsory and tuition-free education policies on financial inclusion in Asian countries

Ni Luh Putu Satyaning Pradnya Paramita

Dikara Alkarisya

Measuring political symbolism for large-n comparative policy studies

Andrew Tanabe (McGill University)

Robbert Biesbroek (Wageningen University)

Creating Quantitatively Comparable Policy Measures to Strengthen Equal Rights and Opportunities Worldwide: New Global Public Use Data Being Created on Equal Rights at Work

DAVID Godfrey (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA)

Jody Heymann (Fielding School of Public Health; WORLD Policy Analysis Center - University of California, Los Angeles)