Indicators for Regional Integration Processes

The main task of Workpackage 3 is to develop a database with indicators for regional integration. The database - including a web frontend - is currently under development. In the near future a discussion about the indicators being supported by the database will be started here.

Objectives

Regional cooperation between sovereign states and among sub-national entities across national boundaries has increased in scope and complexity over the past few decades. The motivations differ greatly among the actors within and across regions, and the impact of regionalisation processes is uneven across sectors, regions, and societal groups. Moreover, there is no one model of regionalisation emerging across the globe and in Africa, Asia, and Latin America political actors are cooperating in a series of formal and informal arrangements that reflect the diversity of conditions in each region. As a result, the implications for better policy making are threefold:

- There is a need to manage the actual processes of regionalisation so as to maximise the welfare for all.
- There is a need to identify and understand the impact of such processes for other areas of political, economic and social interaction.
- There is a need to map the diversity of regional cooperation and integration arrangements at the global level so as to establish the fit between regional and global governance arrangements.

The issues raised by regional integration (defined as a multi-dimensional process) are linked to broader questions about the future of the international institutional architecture, and whether tendencies may be expected in the direction of multilateralism, regionalism, or an evolving combination of both. They are linked to the questions about motivations and effects of regional integration and whether the relationships between regional integration and globalisation are relationships of complementarity, functionality, stability, optimality, reaction, or conflict. The academic community has, until now, dedicated more efforts to the development of indicators of globalisation than to indicators of regionalisation.

A better understanding of regionalisation within the context of globalisation requires an improved system of empirical study to facilitate analytical measurement and the conduct of valid comparisons. Sophisticated methods exist to study certain narrow aspects of regional integration (for example, welfare effects of trade liberalisation, or conditions for monetary union), but there is a need for new instruments to monitor regional integration and assess the broader impact on political, economic and social relations. In this context, this workpackage is aimed at what should ultimately become a long-term project for the construction and maintenance of an information system on regional integration, including indicators that permit comparative and interdisciplinary analyses. This system should be able to produce relevant information for both policy makers and the academic community.

Coordinators and members

- United Nations University - Comparative Regional Integration Studies
- Department of Peace and Development Research, Göteborg University
- Institut d’Études Politiques de Bordeaux
- Center for the Study of Democracy
- Centro Ricerche di Economia Internazionale
- Institute of International Studies, Wroclaw
- Centre for the Study of Globalisation Regionalisation, Warwick
- London School of Economics
- Institute of Political Science, Münster
- Department of Sociology and Social Research, Trento
- Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London