

5th International Annual Research Conference  
“Cultural and Economic Changes under Cross-National  
Perspective”

November 16 - 20, 2015

Moscow, Russia

## **Measuring Political Inequality of Voice Worldwide**

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# What is political inequality?

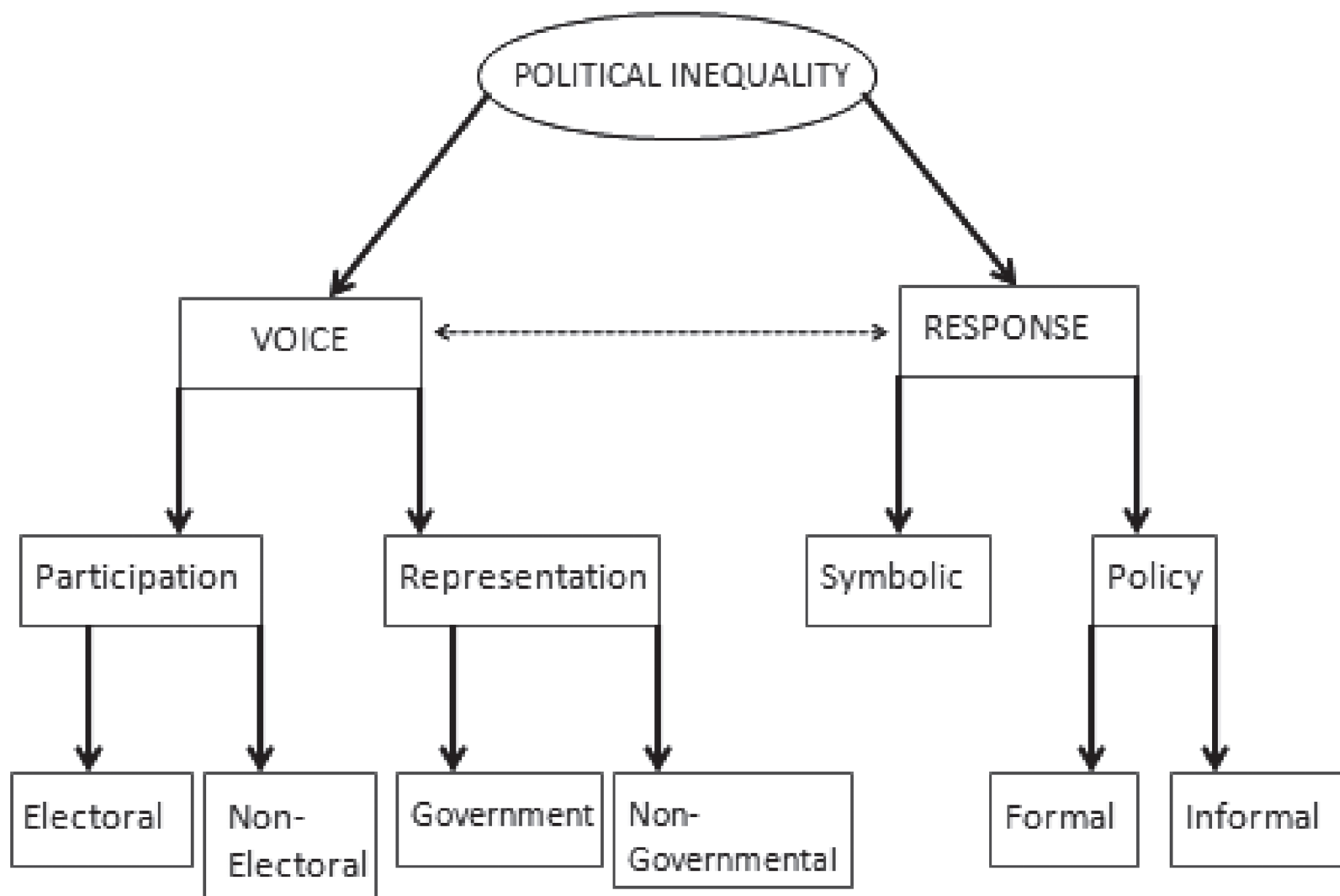
- Equality of political opportunities and equality of political outcomes
- Dimension of democracy and dimension of stratification
- A type of power inequality
- It is unequal influence over decisions made by political bodies and the unequal outcomes of those decisions.

## **Main research questions:**

- ☐ How much political inequality is there?
- ☐ Over time, is political inequality rising, falling or staying the same?

To answer these questions, we need to measure political inequality.

Inequality is a gap, and requires measures of distance between two groups.



Three major shortcomings of the measurement of political inequality literature:

## **1. Misclassification**

Political inequality is either equated with economic inequality (the “money in politics” problem), or is buried in a measure of democracy (and is not measured as inequality).

While economic inequality is a fundamental feature of modern economic systems, we don’t measure economic inequality with the economic system itself.

Three major shortcomings of the measurement of political inequality literature:

## **2. Partial measurement**

Voting is a popular measure of voice, but it is just a subset of the whole political process.

## **3. Parochialism**

Measures of outcomes are often single country, rarely cross-national.

# **Towards a cross-national measure of political inequality: some options**

1. A single cross-national measure
2. Multiple measures based on type and locus of political inequality
3. Multiple measures based on social groups (e.g. women's political inequality)
4. Multiple measures based on type, locus and social group (e.g. women's political inequality of voice in national parliaments)

# Measuring gendered political inequality of voice in Europe

Data on participation come from the *European Social Survey*, 2002 – 2012

**Electoral** = proportion of men and of women who voted in last election and **Non-electoral** = (a) proportion of men and of women who attended a public demonstration; (b) proportion of men and of women who signed a petition

Inequality measures: prop. of men minus the prop. of women

The correlations between these three measures are moderate and positive.

We created a single factor: Eigenvalue = 1.7; variance explained by the three indicators = 57%; all factor loadings > 0.6.



## Measuring gendered political inequality of voice in Europe

Data on representation come from Paxton et al *Women in Parliaments* database, updated with IPU's data.

Inequality measure is proportion of men in lower parliament minus proportion of women in lower parliament.

To achieve a common metric with the participation factor, we standardized the “representation” measure.

We created a single measure of gendered political inequality of voice as the average of both variables:

$$(\text{“participation”} + \text{“representation”}) / 2$$

## **Measuring gendered political inequality of voice in Europe**

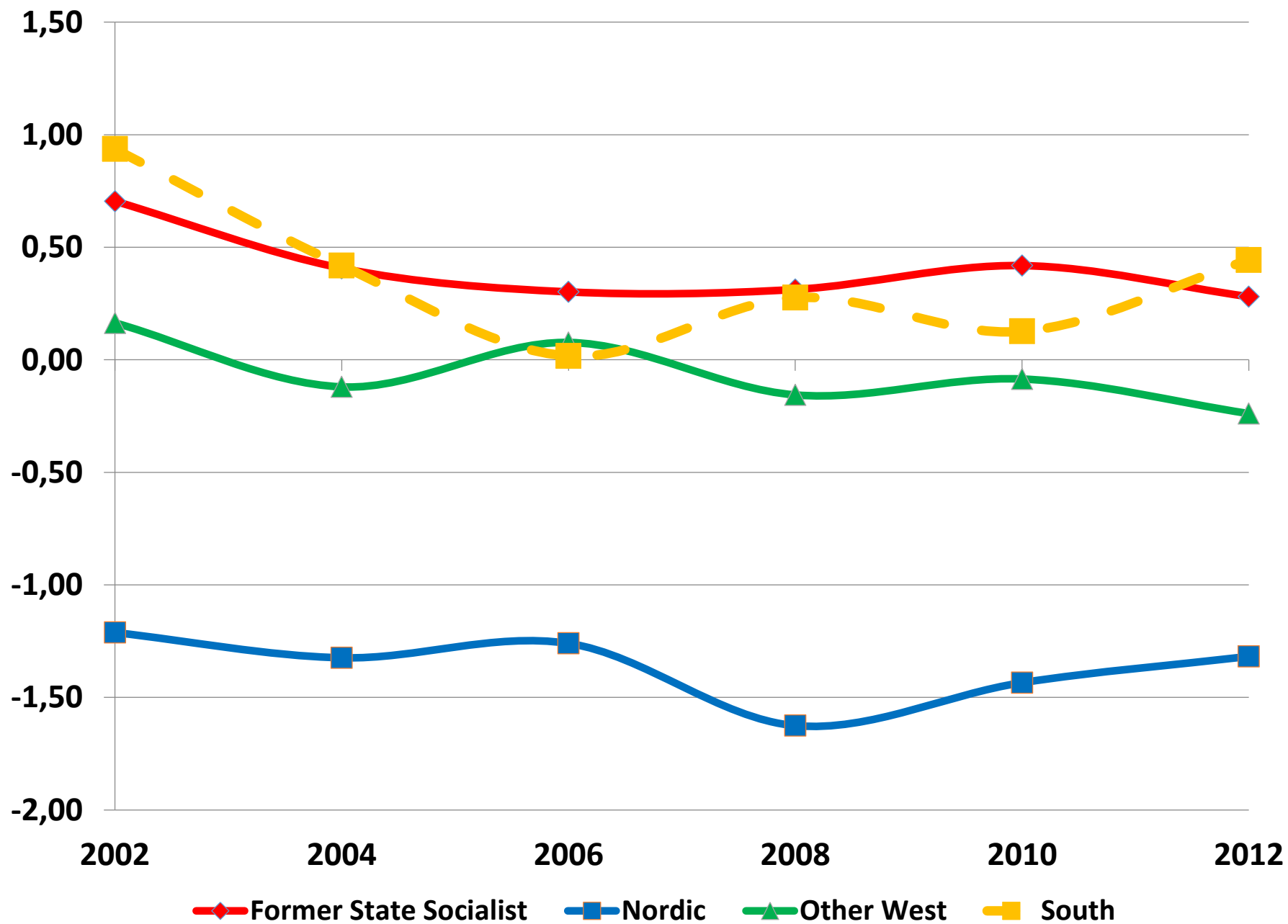
For the variable, gendered political inequality of voice:

Time span is 2002 – 2012

The higher the score, the greater the inequality

The mean is zero and the st. dev is 0.8

The range is from -2.40 (Denmark in 2008) to 1.68 (Turkey in 2004)



## World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report (since 2006)

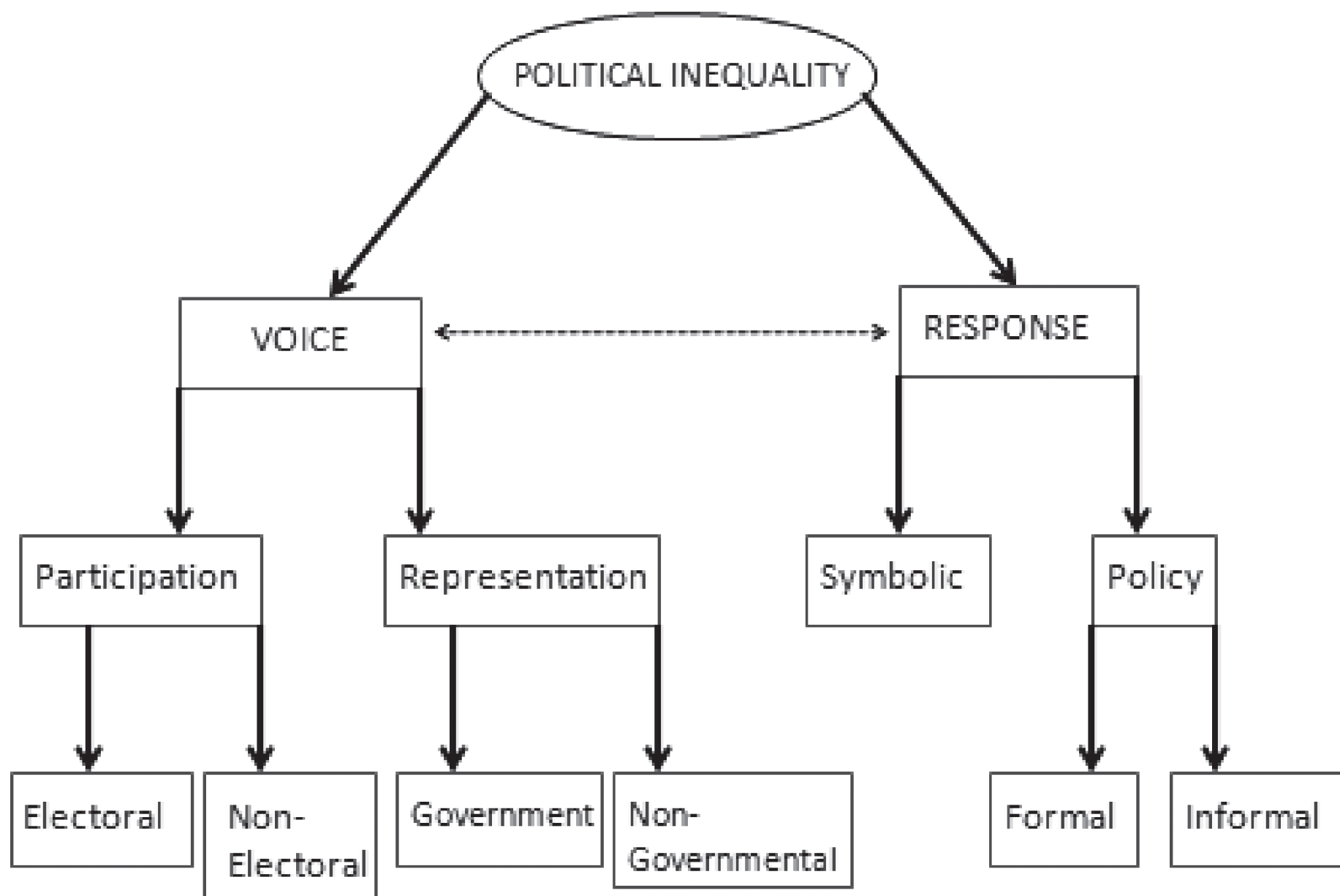
Political Empowerment is a combination of ratios of (a) females with seats in parliament, (b) females at ministerial level and (c) number of years of a female head of state over the last 50 years, to the respective numbers for men (the higher the score the greater the empowerment of women)

For 27 countries in 2012, WEF's Global Gender Gap significantly and negatively correlates with

Gendered political inequality of voice → 0.75

Participatory inequality factor only → 0.46

Representation inequality only → 0.77



## Lessons We Learned

- All measures can be improved and data and country availability matter very much
- Models using political inequality of voice should include controls for (a) level of democracy and (b) level of non-governmental representation, if possible
- Difficult to measure inequality of non-governmental representation (what are the comparison groups?)
- Measuring response is a very different problem.

# Why We Should Not Measure Political Inequality

From the project, “Indicators as a Technology of Global Governance:”

“The burgeoning production and use of indicators has not been accompanied by systematic comparative study of, and reflection on, the implications, possibilities and pitfalls of this practice.”

Their project asks important questions:

“How does the increasing use of indicators in global governance affect the distribution of power, and the power of the governed?

How does it affect the nature of decision-making about the allocation of resources and efforts to monitor compliance with global standards?

What social processes surround the creation and use of indicators, and how do the conditions of production influence the kinds of knowledge that indicators provide?”

<b>Region</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>
Former State Socialist	0.70	0.41	0.30	0.31	0.42	0.28
Nordic	-1.21	-1.32	-1.26	-1.63	-1.43	-1.32
Other West	0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.16	-0.09	-0.24
South	0.94	0.42	0.02	0.28	0.13	0.44



This report was presented at the 5th LCSR International Annual Conference “Cultural and Economic Changes under Cross-national Perspective”.

November 16 – 20, 2015 – Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

<http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/conf2015>

Настоящий доклад был представлен на V ежегодной международной конференции ЛССИ «Культурные и экономические изменения в сравнительной перспективе».

16-20 ноября 2015 года – НИУ ВШЭ, Москва, Россия.

<http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/conf2015>