

Thematic Field A: Global Governance and Regional Integration

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BIGSSS' Thematic Field B addresses the relationships between political, social, legal, historical, and economic developments in the "post-national constellation", that is, after the demise of the nation state as container. It considers supranationalization (European integration) and globalization as part of "a continuum of internationalization" and studies the phenomenon of political integration, comparing processes and outcomes at different levels and in different regions. Traditional forms of intergovernmental politics are being complemented or superseded by international and supranational regulatory regimes. Private actors, such as NGOs and multinational enterprises, have also become more involved in the international sphere, generating what has become known as "transnational" governance. The result is the emergence of hybrid forms of governance that mix public, private, "hard" (legally binding) and "soft" (based on persuasion and advice) governance.

Research questions in Thematic Field A fall into three groups:

1. The emergence of global or regional governance and the dynamics of decision-making: What forms of political, social and economic integration are dominant in various geographical regions and across various fields of policy? Who participates and who is excluded? Which legal and non-legal forms of governance are emerging? What are the driving forces behind (and brakes on) the emergent forms of global and regional governance? How does the multi-level structure of these governance arrangements look like and what repercussions do they have for the nation state?
2. The effectiveness of global and regional governance: Which forms of global governance are effective where? Which actors should participate in such governance to make it effective? Can supranational, transnational or private governance be as effective as purely public governance arrangements? Where is hard governance more effective than soft governance and vice versa? Where do these modes of governance complement each other and where do they work as substitutes? How does governance beyond the nation state affect domestic societies?
3. Conflict, contestation, and legitimacy in global and regional governance: What are the major conflicts and fault lines in global and regional governance? What patterns of contestation does it evoke? How are these conflicts processed, by violent or non-violent means, by democratic procedures or by institutional change? How does it transform patterns of domestic contestation within nation states? How does it affect standards of political legitimacy?