

Introduction: Evaluating global orders

NICHOLAS RENGGER

This is the final special issue of the *Review* under the Editorship of the team at St. Andrew's University.¹ In previous special issues we have investigated the critical turn in International Relations (IR) theory,² the politics of global communication³ and the phenomenon of regionalism in contemporary IR.⁴ For our final such issue we decided that we wanted to look, in rather more general compass, at conceptualisations of 'global order' *tout court*. That is to say, we wanted to look at the way in which we – all of us in this hugely contested and contestable field – imagine and evaluate both the 'orders' that make up what we often rather loosely refer to as 'the global order', and the ways in which we do the evaluating.

Thus, in this special issue we look at a number of different ways of evaluating and assessing the global orders that characterise contemporary International Relations, both as it is conventionally understood (and practiced) and as it is variously and differently understood or imagined. We make no claim to exhaustiveness – indeed we doubt if an exhaustive understanding of the different ways we might imagine and evaluate global orders is possible – but we do hope that the various articles that collectively make up this special issue offer interesting and provocative 'evaluations' that can spark other such reflections in our readership.

We do not intend to list here or discuss the individual contributions – they will speak for themselves. While some of the chapters that follow have been specially commissioned for this issue – such as some of the responses to Louise Arbour's July 2008 article on the 'Responsibility to protect' and the discussion of David Miller's *National Responsibility and Global Justice* – others were submitted to the journal in the usual way and were selected for inclusion here because they seem to offer particular ways of 'evaluating' global orders that were interesting to reflect upon. Some reflect on a particular aspect of the contemporary global order (the role of the UN as an 'ideas entrepreneur', perhaps, or the problems and prospects of the 'liberal peace') others imagine a very different world order (that envisaged

¹ It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have been the custodians of the *Review* over the last five years. We thank all those who submitted articles to the *Review*, all of our referees without whom the job of the editorial team would be literally impossible and all of those at Cambridge University Press who work with such tireless efficiency to produce the journal. And we wish the new team every good fortune during their tenure.

² The 2007 special issue later published as Nicholas Rengger and Ben Thirkell-White (eds), *Critical International Relations Theory After twenty Five Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³ The 2008 special issue, later published as Oliver Richmond, Alison Watson and Costas Constantinou (eds), *Global Communications and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴ The 2009 special issue later published as Rick Fawn (ed.), *Globalizing the Regional, Regionalizing the Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

2 *Nicholas Rengger*

by ancient tradition, for example) but all make us think about how we might ‘evaluate’ global orders and what it is we do when we think of global order at all, in any context, and that was really our aim in this special issue.

While people will, of course, be inclined to agree with this or that article more than with some others, what these articles really constitute is an invitation to further dialogue. If we are to understand the complexities, opportunities and problems that constitute our increasingly global society, it is to such dialogue that we must look. And in that context the role of journals such as the *Review*, in facilitating such a dialogue is more important than ever. We look forward to seeing how the *Review* continues the dialogue in the years to come.

How United Nations ideas change history

THOMAS G. WEISS

Abstract. This article considers the United Nations (UN) as a creator and facilitator of innovative ideas in world politics. It thereby breathes new life into the world organisation's overlooked characteristics: the quality and diversity of its intellectual leadership, and its value-based framework for dealing with the global challenges of our times. The nature of UN ideas are examined – the good, the bad, and the ugly – while recognising that most have multiple origins and various carriers, and it continues by assessing impact. Three types of UN ideas – positive, normative, and instrumental – are discussed. Positive ideas are those resting on hard evidence, open to challenge and verifiable. Normative ideas are beliefs about what the world should look like. Instrumental (which some might label 'causal') ideas are often about what strategy will have what result or what tactic will achieve a desirable outcome, usually less verifiable and with a normative veneer. The article then examines nine UN ideas that changed the world, before illustrating the significance of this by examining two counterfactuals: a world without the world organisation and its ideas as well as with a more creative institution.

Thomas G. Weiss is Presidential Professor of Political Science and Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York and was President of the International Studies Association (2009–2010). His latest single-authored book is *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

Ideas are a main driving force in human progress and also one of the world organisation's most important contributions over the last six and a half decades, which is the central finding by the independent UN Intellectual History Project.¹ The project's seventeen volumes and oral history archive provide substantive accounts of the UN's work in major areas of economic and social thinking and action, as well as in related areas where the boundaries of peace and development intersect – namely, human security, human rights, preventive diplomacy, and global governance.²

This research has breathed new life into the UN's overlooked characteristics: the quality and diversity of its intellectual leadership, and its values-based

¹ This article draws on Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and Thomas G. Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

² See S. Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong-Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) and Bertrand G. Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy at the UN* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). The project's volumes cited in this article are published by Indiana University Press with the exception of Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Full details are available at: {www.unhistory.org}.

framework for dealing with the global challenges of our times. The project's decade-long effort has explored areas omitted or undervalued in textbooks about the world organisation or units of the UN system – namely, the ideas, norms, and principles that permeate the world body's atmosphere. The results provide an argument that flies in the face of UN bashing, a favourite sport not just in Washington's Beltway but elsewhere. Unlike popular wisdom – graciously stimulated by the mass media – the UN is more than a rigid bureaucracy without sparkle, wit, or creativity. Nor is it merely a travelling circus, a talk shop, and paper-pusher. These perceptions and on-and-off-again tales of corruption sustain an unbalanced view even if elements of such criticism strike close to home on First Avenue in Manhattan. But we cannot judge a portrait about Boeing or Airbus that concentrates on its employees' globe-trotting, internet surfing, or wasting of resources without mentioning the quality of products, the bottom line, and plans for the future. A fair depiction of an enterprise or an international organisation is incomplete and misleading without a discussion of its goals and achievements, including intellectual leadership.

International organisations live or die, thrive or shrivel up, by the quality and relevance of the policy ideas that they put forward and sustain. It is essential to examine the good, the bad, and the ugly. This article begins by examining the nature of ideas, albeit recognising that most (especially those of the world body) have multiple origins and various carriers, and it continues by assessing their impact. Following a listing of nine UN ideas that have changed the world, the world body's under-appreciated role is illustrated by examining two counterfactuals: a world without the UN and its ideas as well as a more creative institution. The conclusion explores how to improve the UN's intellectual output and punch.

The nature of ideas

To most people, the UN is unitary; but the real organisation consists of three linked components that interact. Inis Claude long ago distinguished the arena for state decision-making, the First UN of member states,³ from the Second UN of staff members and secretariat heads who are paid from assessed and voluntary budgets. The Third UN of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts, commissions, and academics is a more recent addition to analytical perspectives.⁴ This broader embrace of what constitutes the world body is not only a more accurate reflection of reality but also crucial to understanding the itinerary of ideas. It is noteworthy that this history does not include the private, for-profit sector that has essentially been missing in action in relationship to the UN's past intellectual contributions. A foundation for a 'Fourth UN' has been laid with the Global Compact and other traditional ones like employers at the International Labour Organisation, which will certainly be a more substantial part of a future intellectual history.

³ Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords Into Plowshares: The Problems and Prospects of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1956), and 'Peace and Security: Prospective Roles for the Two UN', *Global Governance*, 2:3 (1996), pp. 289–98.

⁴ Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly, 'The "Third" UN', *Global Governance*, 15:1 (2009), pp. 123–42.

What do we – in this article, my use does not connote the ‘royal we’ but rather my close collaboration with Richard Jolly and Louis Emmerij that makes it hard to separate our collective responsibility for what follows – mean by ideas? Ideas are notions and beliefs held by individuals and institutions that influence their attitudes and actions, in this case, toward economic and social development. Such ideas mostly arise as the result of social interactions among people or groups within any of the three UN or among them. Often ideas take more definite shape over time, sometimes as the result of research, often through debate or challenges, other times through efforts to turn ideas into policy as well as experiment by putting them into practice.

Three types of UN ideas – *positive*, *normative*, and *causal* – are worth distinguishing. Positive ideas are those resting on hard evidence, open to challenge and verifiable. That the countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) spent about 0.3 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) on development assistance in 2009 is an example. Normative ideas are beliefs about what the world *should* look like. That these countries *ought* to implement the long-standing UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of the GNI on development assistance or that there should be a more equitable allocation of world resources are examples. Causal ideas are often about what strategy will have what result or what tactic will achieve a desirable outcome, usually less verifiable and with a normative veneer. At the UN, causal ideas often take an operational form – for instance, the calculation that over 0.5 per cent of GNI will be needed as official development assistance (ODA) to realise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Causal ideas can be specific, but they usually are much less than full-blown theories.⁵ For example, if we were to begin with the sweeping ethical proposition that the world should be more just, then the idea of a more equitable allocation of resources can be both a normative idea as well as one causal way to improve international justice.

UN ideas have set past and present international agendas within economic and social arenas and will do so for future ones. The lack of attention to the UN’s role in generating or nurturing ideas is perplexing, as Ngaire Woods tells us: ‘In short, ideas, whether economic or not, have been left out of analyses of international relations.’⁶ Many political scientists are rediscovering the role of ideas in international policymaking. We say *rediscovering* because the study of ideas may be relatively new in analyses of international politics and organisations but is common bill-of-fare for historians, philosophers, students of literature, and economists – that is, analysts who see forces at work besides sovereign states selfishly calculating their interests.

The political science literature on the role of ideas that informs this inquiry can be grouped into three broad categories. The first is institutionalism – such as Judith Goldstein’s and Robert Keohane’s analyses of foreign policy⁷ and Kathryn

⁵ Morten Boås and Desmond McNeill, *Global Institutions and Development: Framing the World?* (London: Routledge, 2004).

⁶ Ngaire Woods, ‘Economic Ideas and International Relations: Beyond Rational Neglect’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 39 (1995), p. 164.

⁷ Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds), *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Sikkink's on developmentalism in Latin America⁸ – and is concerned with how organisations shape the policy preferences of their members. Ideas can be particularly important for policymaking during periods of upheaval. In thinking about the end of World War II or of the Cold War or post-September 11th challenges, for instance, ideas provided a conceptual road map that can be used to understand changing preferences and definitions of vital interests for state and non-state actors alike. This approach helps to situate the dynamics at work among ideas, multilateral institutions, and national policies. It also enables us to begin thinking about how the UN influences elite and popular images, as well as how opinion-makers affect the world organisation.

The second category focuses on the approaches and interactions of various groups, including Peter Haas's epistemic communities,⁹ Peter Hall's Keynesian economists,¹⁰ Ernst B. Haas's purveyors of knowledge and power,¹¹ as well as Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's more amorphous transnational networks of activists.¹² These approaches examine the role of intellectuals in creating ideas, of technical experts in diffusing them and making them more concrete and scientifically grounded, and of all sorts of people in influencing the positions adopted by a wide range of actors, especially governments. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a powerful recent illustration of such influence because the network of world-class volunteer scientists from several disciplines translate scientific findings into the language comprehensible by policymakers.

Networks of experts influence a broad spectrum of international politics through their ability to interact with policymakers irrespective of location and national boundaries. Researchers working on climate change or HIV/AIDS, for instance, can have an impact on policy by clarifying an issue from which decision-makers may explore what is in the interests of their administrations. Researchers also can help to frame the debate on a particular issue, thus narrowing the acceptable range of bargaining in international negotiations. They can introduce standards for action. These networks can help provide justifications for alternatives, and often build national or international coalitions to support chosen policies and to advocate for change. In many ways, efforts by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to shed light on human impact on the natural environment borrow from Thomas Kuhn's often-cited work on the nature of scientific revolutions.¹³

⁸ Kathryn Sikkink, *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Argentina and Brazil* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁹ Peter M. Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, 46:1 (1992), pp. 1–36; and Peter M. Haas, Robert O. Keohane and Marc A. Levy (eds), *Institutions for the Earth: Sources of Effective International Environmental Protection* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Peter A. Hall (ed.), *The Political Power of Economic Ideas: Keynesianism Across Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

¹¹ Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge is Power: Three Models of Change in International Organizations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); and see Peter M. Haas and Ernst B. Haas, 'Learning to Learn: Improving International Governance', *Global Governance*, 1:3 (1995), pp. 55–284.

¹² Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

¹³ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

The third category consists of so-called constructivists such as Alexander Wendt¹⁴ and John G. Ruggie.¹⁵ They seek to determine the potential for individuals, especially members of governments and international institutions, to be active agents for change rather than robots whose behaviour merely reflects previous theories and accumulated experience. Also relevant are the critical approaches of those influenced by Antonio Gramsci and the Italian school of Marxism, such as Robert Cox and his followers.¹⁶ They, however, view the work of all organisations, including the UN, as heavily determined by material conditions and supportive of the *status quo*.

Irrespective of how one weighs the value of these three bodies of literature, individuals and organisations and their ideas matter. The UN system has spawned or nurtured a large number of individuals who have called into question conventional wisdom as well as reinforced it. Indeed, the very definition of what passes for ‘conventional’ at a particular point in time in various regions of the world is part of the puzzle that we have only begun to address.

In addition, numerous questions typically circulate about the importance of ideas. First, which comes first, the idea or policy and action? Most approaches do not explain the sources of ideas but rather their effects. They rarely explain how ideas emerge or change, with the exception of pointing to technological innovations. By ignoring where ideas come from and how they change, cause and effect are uncertain. Do ideas shape policy, or do they merely serve, after the fact, as a convenient justification for a policy or a decision? Or does policy push existing ideas forward, and perhaps even generate new ones that may emerge in response to that policy or action? Quentin Skinner raised these issues forty years ago: ‘[T]he social context, it is said, helps to cause the formation and change of ideas; but the ideas in turn help to cause the formation and change of the social context. Thus the historian ends up presenting himself with nothing better than the time-honored puzzle about the chicken and the egg.’¹⁷ We are agnostic and eclectic.

Second, are ideas mere products, or do they have a life of their own? For us, it is the latter; and our volumes have tried to trace the trajectory of ideas within the UN and examine how individual leadership, coalitions, and national and international bureaucratic rivalries within the UN have generated, nurtured, distorted, and implemented particular ideas. At the same time, it is crucial to discern whether and how ideas, in and of themselves, have helped to shape policy outcomes at the UN.¹⁸

Third, should an idea be analysed in light of the historical and social context within which it emerged and evolved? For our part, we argue that economic and social ideas at the UN cannot be properly understood if examined on their own,

¹⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁵ John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

¹⁶ See, for example, Robert W. Cox (ed.), *The New Realism: Perspectives on Multilateralism and World Order* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997); Robert W. Cox, with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith (eds) and trans., *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

¹⁷ Quentin E. Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’, *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), p. 42.

¹⁸ See Ramesh Thakur and Thomas G. Weiss, ‘UN “Policy”: An Argument with Three Illustrations’, *International Studies Perspectives*, 10:2 (2009), pp. 18–35.

divorced from historical and social circumstances. The birth and survival of ideas within the UN – or their death and suppression – invariably reflect events and are contingent upon world politics and the global economy.

Fourth, when should one begin to trace the trajectory of a particular idea? Could anyone disagree with Woods that ‘very few ideas are very new’?¹⁹ At what point in its life or in which of its many possible incarnations should one begin to study an idea? Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard point out that post-war modernisation theory aimed to transform individuals from ‘superstitious and status-oriented beings to rational and achievement-oriented beings’.²⁰ But the idea of creating a new person is far older than development theory. It could be traced back to the efforts of the earliest missionaries, the Enlightenment, Karl Marx, or, to God with Adam’s rib in the Garden of Eden. We are agnostic about origins, which make little difference to determining impact.

Fifth, what about copyrights and patents? Analysts are still arguing whether Charles Darwin or Alfred Russel Wallace should be foremost credited with the theory of natural selection, and whether Alexander Graham Bell deserves credit for inventing the telephone because so many others were toying with the idea at about the same time. The difficulty of identifying a single individual or institution responsible for the creation of an idea is even more manifest in the complex world of multilateralism. An idea evolves and ownership becomes more widely shared through group processes. Within multilateral institutions, anonymous documents or ones ghost-written for organisational heads are the rule; and widespread ownership is a goal of deliberations.²¹ Hence, it seems futile to undertake the type of historical analysis pioneered by A. O. Lovejoy who sought to trace an idea ‘through all the provinces of history in which it appears’.²² Rather, it is more pragmatic merely to pick up an idea at the time it intersected with the UN.

Sixth, what is the influence of ideas versus the carriers of ideas?²³ There is little consensus about which – in this case, the ideas or the key individuals from the three UNs – are more influential. Yet, Thomas Risse’s framing seems on target, ‘ideas do not float freely’.²⁴ Or for Sheri Bermann, ideas ‘do not have any independent impact by themselves, as disembodied entities floating around in a polity’.²⁵ They need institutions, actors, and opportunities. This is particularly relevant for our treatment of experts and the outside-insiders of the Third UN, many of whom go through revolving doors with experiences in government, secretariats, and the private sector. It can be argued that the more influential the members of an expert group or the greater their access to governmental policymakers, the greater the odds that their ideas will be adopted, irrespective of

¹⁹ Woods, ‘Economic Ideas and International Relations’, p. 168.

²⁰ Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 17.

²¹ See Ramesh Thakur (ed.), *What Is Equitable Geographic Representation in the Twenty-first Century* (Tokyo: UN University, 1999).

²² Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Torchbook, 1960).

²³ See Albert Yee, ‘The Causal Effects of Ideas on Policies’, *International Organization*, 50 (1996), pp. 69–108.

²⁴ Thomas Risse-Kappen, ‘Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War’, *International Organization*, 48:2 (1994), pp. 185–214.

²⁵ Sheri Bermann, *The Social Democratic Moment: Ideas and Politics in the Making of Interwar Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 22.

their inherent value. The impacts of ideas (for good or ill) presuppose agents, and at the UN they cannot be divorced from agency – which is one reason that we documented through oral histories the role of individuals in the evolution of international economic and social development.

In short, our comparative advantage is not as philosophers or patent attorneys. The important fact is that an idea exists and has entered into the arena of the UN. The bottom line results from analysing the evolution and impact of key ideas, especially how international economic and social concepts have been nurtured, refined, and applied under UN auspices. They exist, and they matter.

Assessing the impacts of UN ideas

It is essential to examine how UN ideas exert influence, and how and when they fall flat. The late Barbara Ward wrote: ‘Ideas are the prime movers of history. Revolutions usually begin with ideas.’²⁶ Even more to the point, political theorist Daniel Philpott’s study of sovereignty demonstrates that revolutions for even this building block of international studies too are driven primarily by the power of ideas.²⁷ For instance, we are in the midst of an upheaval in which state sovereignty is becoming more contingent on upholding basic human rights values, in which states have obligations and not just rights.

Ideas lead to action in many ways. While the process is rarely linear, the steps run from the creation of new idea to dissemination to decisions by policymakers to implementation and on to impact and results. We can observe how UN ideas exert influence:

- changing the ways that issues are perceived and the language used to describe them;
- framing agendas for action and definitions of self-interests;
- altering the ways that key groups perceive their interests – and thus altering the balance of forces pressing for action or resisting it; and
- being embedded in institutions, which thus adopt responsibility for carrying the idea forward and become a focus for accountability and monitoring.

The formulation of statistical norms and guidelines provides a concrete example of how the four ways usually operate simultaneously but not necessarily in tandem when setting standards. In *Quantifying the World*, the late Michael Ward traced the development in the early 1950s of the System of National Accounts (SNA), which provided guidelines that even today enable and encourage countries to calculate gross national product (GNP) and other core economic indicators in a standardised way – thereby providing an economic snapshot of economic performance. Agendas for economic policy and action are thus defined in country-after-country, which in turn has unleashed pressures for better use of economic resources as well as for more attention to social and other indicators. The SNA was embedded in

²⁶ Cited by Mahbub ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 204.

²⁷ Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

the work of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) and UN Statistical Office (UNSO). Thus in all four ways, the UN's early work on the SNA has sustained its influence over the following decades. Ward concludes that 'the creation of a universally acknowledged statistical system and of a general framework guiding the collection and compilation of data according to recognised standards, both internationally and nationally, has been one of the great and mostly unsung successes of the UN Organization'.²⁸

Another example is the formulation and adoption of goals for development. Since the launching of the First Development Decade in 1961, the world organisation has debated, adopted, promoted, supported, and monitored a succession of quantified and time-circumscribed goals, serving as both national and international guidelines for economic and social development. In total, some fifty such goals have been agreed, the first being for educational expansion and acceleration of economic growth. Later goals for subsequent decades have covered reductions in child mortality, improvements in human welfare, efforts in sustainable and equitable development, and support for these efforts by the expansion of development assistance. The most well-known probably are the so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for poverty reduction by the year 2015.

A review of performance shows that many such goals have had considerable impact, more than most people realise. The idea of setting objectives and standards is, of course, not new. But setting internationally agreed targets as a means to foster economic and social development is a singular UN achievement. The results have been far from complete successes but rarely total failures. A few, such as the goal in 1967 for the eradication of smallpox or in 1980 for a worldwide reduction of infant mortality and for increases in life expectancy, have registered resounding successes – 'complete achievement' in the case of small pox eradication and 'considerable achievement' in the other two.²⁹

The most serious failures have been in sub-Saharan Africa and the least developed countries. The other weakest performances have been in levels of development aid among the industrialised countries of the global North. Except for Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden – and in the last few years, Luxembourg – developed countries have consistently failed to achieve the 0.7 target for concessional transfers to developing countries in general and fallen short of the specific targets for aid to the least developed countries. But even here, the existence of the goal helped bureaucrats and do-gooders in some countries striving to reach the target and also resulted in their putting pressure on or at least trying to embarrass their stingier Western partners.

We can assess the impact of UN ideas on goal setting. Have the goals altered the ways development is perceived? Here the answer changes over time. The early

²⁸ Michael Ward, *Quantifying the World: UN Contributions to Statistics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 2.

²⁹ By the year 2000, 138 countries had brought infant mortality to below 120 and 124 countries had raised life expectancy to 60 years or more, two of the goals set in 1980. A full assessment of the achievements in relation to the fifty goals are found in 'The Record of Performance', in *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice*, by Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, Dharam Ghai, and Frédéric Lapeyre (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), chap. 10. Differences among regional thinking can be found in Yves Berthelot (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in Development Ideas: Perspectives from the UN Regional Commissions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).