

China can legitimate its reluctance to take on new obligations as an expression of the norm of Special and Differential Treatment. The United States, by contrast, can avail itself of the norm of reciprocity and the widespread metaphor of a “level playing field.” Would things be any different if the normative balance were tipped in favor of one over the other? On the one hand, Hopewell’s interviews turn up a great deal of evidence that the participants are fully aware of each other’s hypocrisy. Yet at times, there appears to be some evidence of real normative pull, as when China’s behavior is explained, at least in part, as an attempt to avoid creating an undesirable normative precedent (p. 118). Whether these legitimization battles play an autonomous role and who may be winning are questions left largely unanswered.

Hopewell’s book is also largely silent on the role of regional trade agreements. Yet as deadlocks in the multilateral system proliferate, these agreements are becoming decisive for the global trade system and important battlefields in the US-China rivalry. Hopewell claims that “there is, as of yet, no sign of China replacing the U.S. as rule-maker within the multilateral trading system or assuming the dominant role in constructing global trade rules” (pp. 192–93). But a focus exclusively at the (global) multilateral level may obscure the changes that are taking place at the regional and interregional level. And here, China has been far from passive, and arguably it has been a more consistent rule maker than the United States in recent years.

There has always been something utopian about the idea of a liberal international trade order, with the economic realm neatly insulated from political interference. Hopewell’s book shows that in the multilateral trade system, the US-China rivalry has brought politics back to the fore.

The Power of Global Performance Indicators. Edited by Judith G. Kelley and Beth A. Simmons. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 450p. \$120.00 cloth.
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— Andrea Liese , University of Potsdam
aliese@uni-potsdam.de

Quantitative comparisons permeate the sphere of global public policies. Although they vary in form—including indices, categorical assessments, blacklists, and hybrids—they all rate and rank actors to ultimately influence policy decisions where coercive means are lacking. This edited volume asks whether and how such global performance indicators (GPIs) can alter policies and governance practices through social pressure. It offers a persuasive framework and a set of excellent empirical chapters that systematically explore this question across an impressively wide range of GPIs, issues, and actors.

The book is composed of 13 chapters and is arranged in 5 parts. The introduction by the editors Judith G. Kelley

and Beth A. Simmons highlights that GPIs are a relatively recent phenomenon and that their use grew nearly exponentially after the 1990s. Their theory of GPI power emphasizes these indicators’ ability to engage reputational concerns. GPIs are introduced as “policy tools” (p. 4) or a “technology of global governance” (p. 16) by which actors use “modern information politics to invoke reputational concerns and influence policy *through the pressure of comparison*” (p. 1, emphasis in original). The framework offers multiple mechanisms at three levels of politics: domestic, elite, and transnational (pp. 9–11). First, domestic audiences draw on a GPI’s focal and comparative information as well as reputation to mobilize supporters and legitimize their demands. Second, bureaucratic elites are incentivized or socialized to self-regulate their behavior. Third, rankings leverage social and material pressures by transnational third parties such as donors and investors.

Collectively, the 11 empirical chapters focus on a variety of GPI creators, mostly intergovernmental organizations (IGOs; 6 chapters) but also NGOs (3 chapters) and states (2 chapters). They span all major policy areas and address the governance of issues such as aid education, corruption, the financing of terrorism, and aid transparency. Together, they offer compelling quantitative and qualitative evidence of the paramount influence of GPIs. Most chapters highlight the importance of transnational pressure, whereas the other two pathways of influence appear to be somewhat less prevalent.

The first part examines the regulatory effects of GPIs. Rush Doshi, Kelley, and Simmons assess how the recently discontinued World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business Index motivated bureaucrats to reform business regulation. Julia C. Morse’s analysis of the Financial Action Task Force’s noncomplier list focuses on the mechanism of transnational market pressure and its effect on lawmakers, who are encouraged to adopt laws on terrorist financing. Helena Hede Skagerlind examines several causal mechanisms to understand how Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG 3) changed gender equality policies in 15 sub-Saharan African countries.

The second part turns to GPIs impact on normative standards. Dan Honig and Catherine Weaver consider how the inclusion of donors in the Aid Transparency Index generates normative pressure and alters donors’ transparency practices. Rie Kijima and Phillip Y. Lipsky surveyed education officials in 46 countries to understand whether and through which pathways cross-national assessments affect education policy. Faradj Koliev, Thomas Sommerer, and Jonas Tallberg examine the effect of the International Labour Organization’s reporting procedure on state compliance. Finally, Jordan Roberts and Juan Tellez explore the impact of a status as “not free” in Freedom in the World reports on diplomatic relations.

The third part switches to nonstate actors as targets of rankings. The chapter by Hyeron Jo, Brian J. Phillips, and

Joshua Alley studies whether the US Foreign Terrorist Organization list affects financial flows to terrorist organizations. Ranjit Lall examines how donor rankings of IGOs affect the funding they receive.

The fourth part comprises two chapters with more skeptical findings regarding GPIs' influence, as well as the book's conclusion. Melissa M. Lee and Aila M. Matanock find that the prominent Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index exerts only limited influence. Although it attracts media attention, it fails to mobilize third-party material pressure or affect states' anticorruption policies. The final empirical chapter, which is by James H. Bisbee, James R. Hollyer, B. Peter Rosendorff, and James Raymond Vreeland, explains and formalizes how GPIs generate unintended consequences. Focusing on primary and secondary education, they show how international assessments—here, the promotion of primary education by the MDGs—prompts countries to shift attention and resources away from non-assessed services. Based on the insights of the empirical chapters, the editors in the conclusion marvelously compare and synthesize the findings of the empirical chapters, exploring the multiple mechanisms across the cases. They also suggest important scope conditions: regime type, resonance of norms, and capacity.

This volume is an essential and timely addition to the existing literature on the power of IGOs, nonstate actors, or both because it emphasizes their governance tools. It relates to several important debates in international relations (IR) and is thus of interest to a broad audience. Its emphasis on social and material pressure speaks to debates on the mechanisms of global governance and the pathways to induce behavioral change. The interplay or mutual enforcement of reputational considerations, learning, competition, and material pressures echoes assumptions from rationalist and ideational IR scholarship. The inclusion of various GPI creators and intermediaries speaks to the ongoing debate on the diversification of governance actors. Its analysis of objectification and quantification points to the production of knowledge in IR, even if this aspect features least prominently in the framework and the empirical chapters. Finally, the careful consideration of various scope conditions, ranging from local values to governance structures in the target country, should be of interest to those working in area studies and comparative politics.

A core strength of the work is its mix of analytical cohesiveness with thematic and methodological breadth. Given that only one contribution finds a null effect, the book offers impressive and invaluable empirical evidence that rankings and ratings matter and become influential through mechanisms at the domestic, elite, and transnational level. The breadth of issues and actors studied makes the presented evidence particularly rich. The wide range of quantitative and qualitative methods applied across the

chapters makes the findings even more convincing: the empirical chapters use new data—observational data, key informant interviews, and elite surveys—and apply a range of methods, such as media analyses, case studies, experiments, and statistical analyses. Combining the individual chapters' insights allows for systematically exploring the multiple mechanisms and gaining insights into their scope conditions.

Yet, the book also points to several issues that deserve greater attention and should be addressed in future research. First, the chapter by Bisbee and coauthors serves as an important corrective to a volume that mainly focuses on GPIs' intended and immediate consequences. The chapter suggests that “unintended consequences are common” but that “it is unclear whether they always subvert the implicit goals of the GPI” (p. 378). Expanding on this chapter's findings, future research could pay more attention to both the broader unintended consequences, such as socioeconomic effects on stakeholders or the downplaying of issues not covered by a particular GPI—for instance, environmental protection—and the direct interference of the observed substitution effect in the case of other GPIs.

Second, readers may be interested in a more in-depth account of the ideological and donor-related biases inherent in several GPIs and their roles in altering the normative discourse around a subject and reproducing hierarchies among states. Several chapters briefly point to normative concerns and corresponding accountability issues, such as the lack of a GPI's neutrality or the imposition of Western values. These observations raise doubts as to whether the power of the GPI always hinges on the credibility and expert authority of the GPI's creator—as the framework proposes (pp. 6–7)—and not, at least in some cases, on the instrumental value that a GPI has for politically powerful or financially mighty third parties that use it to push for the reforms they favor.

A third question pertains to the argument that GPIs rely on noncoercive means (p. 409) and that their power stems from their reputation. Whereas the elite mechanism mainly functions through learning and status concerns, many chapters show that the domestic and transnational pathways usually work through social or material pressure as induced by third-party actors—which may indeed be an instance of coercive means. Julia C. Morse, for example, argues in her chapter that “GPIs can lead transnational market actors to serve as outside enforcers” (p. 62).

Finally, the book invites a more systematic analysis of the agency of ranked actors and intermediaries. Research has documented how powerful states seek to manipulate rankings. How does this affect the credibility and power of GPIs? Relatedly, two of the mechanisms—domestic and transnational pressure—rely on third parties and their resources. These intermediaries choose whether they use GPIs to exert social or material pressure for their vision of ideal state performance. When and why do intermediaries

use GPIs as a policy tool? To answer these questions, we need research that compares various rankings and their relationship to third parties.

The Power of Global Performance Indicators can be recommended as essential reading for a wide range of political science audiences—particularly scholars and students interested in mainly noncoercive mechanisms to induce policy change and compliance, in the diversification of actors and more recent forms of global governance, in global knowledge production and the power of information, in the shift of authority and power in international relations—and, of course, for everyone interested in GPIs.

Thin Sympathy: A Strategy to Thicken Transitional

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— David Backer , University of Maryland
dbacker@umd.edu

The interdisciplinary field of transitional justice has long grappled with the challenges of how to optimize outcomes when tackling difficult legacies of violence in settings that have experienced conflict. Ideally, steps are taken to achieve gains that effectively address the needs of affected individuals and communities while promoting meaningful, sustained sociopolitical development that facilitates a durable peace and improved quality of life. An increasingly large share of the attention of practitioners and scholars alike has been devoted to assessing the impact of formal measures, such as criminal trials, lustration, truth commissions, and amnesty, implemented by governments and international institutions.

This book instead focuses on enabling conditions of transitional justice. Joanna Quinn's approach is equal parts theory-building—in the tradition of early contributors to the field, involving an intersection of moral philosophy, political psychology and sociology, and peace and conflict studies—and original empirical research grounded primarily in her substantial fieldwork in Uganda. She seeks to establish why transitional justice often runs into trouble and to identify the necessary foundations conducive to possibilities of positive results. In essence, she is trying to cut a Gordian knot by proposing a succinct, bold solution to increase the effectiveness of transitional justice (p. 6).

Quinn highlights the context in which transitional justice transpires, particularly before any formal measures are implemented. She rightfully argues that this environment is integral to whether those measures will be truly viable, fully authentic, suitably purposeful, and realistically capable of success (p. 9). As she emphasizes, transitional justice does not happen in a vacuum. Even long after undergoing transitions, conflict-affected societies are often wracked by trauma, disarray, divisions, mistrust, and

uncertainty among diverse segments of the population. Some societies proceed with transitional justice-like measures despite not ending conflicts or undertaking real transitions. Against these backdrops, Quinn contends, accomplishing progress via such measures is hard and perhaps impossible (chapters 3 and 4). The dilemma she pinpoints is that transitional justice will be prone to disappoint if not fail, with the risk of harmful consequences, when conditions are inhospitable (p. 23).

A core feature of Quinn's argument concerns timing and sequencing of implementation (p. 3). She asserts that minimum requirements ought to be in place and cultivated intentionally before formal transitional measures are implemented. Her argument invokes a concept of ripeness (p. 40) akin to the notable theory of conflict negotiation popularized by I. William Zartman. She is advocating for readiness (p. 110) rather than urgency, which is justified as promptness (p. 29).

Quinn argues that an essential element of effective transitional justice is what she labels as "thin sympathy"—roughly amounting to a minimum sufficient extent of cognitive awareness and appreciation throughout the broader population of what those directly affected by conflict experienced; she acknowledges that this knowledge and recognition are short of empathy, unity of identity, and common cause (chapter 4). She identifies a prevalent shortcoming within affected societies in terms of a basic understanding of the circumstances of conflict, which she deems a necessary foundation for an adequate, honest reckoning with the past and a commensurate ability to make gains in rebuilding (p. 44).

The notion that a robust realization of thin sympathy will be worthwhile in conflict-affected settings is compelling. Quinn makes a convincing claim of the importance of this foundation if and when transitional justice is implemented. She presents persuasive evidence about Uganda and other cases that the existence of thin sympathy also matters in the absence of formal transitional justice (p. 24) or amid deficient transitional justice-like measures (p. 30). In effect, the pursuit of thin sympathy is important if the political will to undertake transitional justice is lacking or its measures are implemented with dubious intentions, inadequate zeal and support, or constrained capabilities. Quinn optimistically suggests that this pursuit may move things along toward a more favorable trajectory (p. 99).

Yet the set of unaccommodating cases is seemingly not where the benefits of thin sympathy would be greatest. In principle, those payoffs are maximized in contexts where the aspirations are truly progressive, not where transition justice efforts' objectives are merely to offset the risk of sclerosis and set the stage for a future time when doing more will be conceivable.

These observations lead to a fundamental question of research design: What can the case of Uganda feasibly demonstrate in terms of testing Quinn's theory? Should