



Quantifying the World: UN Ideas and Statistics (United Nations Intellectual History Project Series)

Michael Ward

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Good data, Michael Ward argues, serve to enhance a perception about life as well as to deepen an understanding of reality. This history of the UN's role in fostering international statistics in the postwar period demonstrates how statistics have shaped our understanding of the world. Drawing on well over 40 years of experience working as a statistician and economist in more than two dozen countries around the world, Ward traces the evolution of statistical ideas and how they have responded to the needs of policy while unraveling the question of why certain data were considered important and why other data and concerns were not. The book explores the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the UN's statistical work and how each dimension has provided opportunities for describing the well-being of the world community. Quantifying the World also reveals some of the missed opportunities for pursuing alternative models.

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