

Introduction

The Global Challenges and Their Governance

The global community currently confronts a comprehensive, interconnected array of compelling global challenges across the economic, development and security domains. They range from the ongoing search for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive economic growth backed by stable financial systems, the struggle for adequate social development, poverty reduction, energy and environmental security, and the reality and threat of violent conflict and weapons proliferation from old state and new non-state actors alike.

Meeting these challenges requires ever stronger, smarter global governance, above all from the leaders of the world's most significant countries, the multilateral organizations they control and the many civil society communities upon which they ultimately depend. At the centre of such global governance for the 21st century stand the new plurilateral summit institutions (PSIs): above all, the Group of Eight (G8) arising in 1998 and the Group of 20 (G20) in 2008, as well as the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in 2009.

Yet many observers and participants see the performance of these new PSIs declining and thus doubt their ability to cope with the greater global challenges arising now. One particular concern is the effectiveness of these institutions in producing appropriate, effective results. Another key concern is their legitimacy, based importantly on their governing in an inclusive and transparent way. At the core of both these concerns lies the key question of accountability – do the members comply with their commitments in ways that share the burden fairly, that assess their performance allowing for needed self-correction and dynamic improvement in response to changing circumstances, and that produce the intended and needed results to benefit all?

The Purpose of This Collection

To address these concerns, it is important to critically evaluate how effectively and legitimately these central global summit institutions are working and how they can best be strengthened to deliver better results and lives for all.

To do so, this special issue of the *International Organisations Research Journal* assesses the current status of global summit governance of key economic, development and security challenges by focusing on six key questions:

1. *Global challenges*: What are the current and coming central global challenges requiring governance by the Group of Seven (G7) and the G8, the G20 and the BRICS, both at the summit level and through their governance systems?

2. *Governance responses*: How effective have the responses of the G7/8, G20 and BRICS been on key dimensions of governance, notably in producing timely, well-tailored and appropriately ambitious principles, precise commitments and improved global governance institutions to meet these challenges, including in innovative ways?

3. *Members' compliance*: How well have members complied with these commitments in their implementing behaviour, done so in ways that achieve the intended and needed results, and advanced the distinctive foundational their missions?

4. *Accountability approaches*: What accountability mechanisms have they used to increase effectiveness and legitimacy, including self-assessment by leaders and their internal agents; assessments by independent analysts covering all or individual issues; reviews by multilateral organizations asked to assist by the summits or working on their own; and reviews by civil society advocacy groups including those connected to the summit process itself?

5. *Accountability impact*: How well have these mechanisms actually worked in improving the effectiveness and the accompanying transparency, legitimacy and popular support of the summits? How have they worked to enhance self-correction through learning, peer persuasion, pressure and protection, and by inducing others to contribute to achieving the intended results?

6. *Accountability innovation*: How can these accountability approaches best be improved through particular innovations that strengthen the accountability and thus the effectiveness and legitimacy of these central global governance groups?

The Contributors

To address these questions, this collection assembles leading global academic experts from several countries. The authors reflect on the questions focusing on economic, social and security governance agenda.

Anthony Payne, in “Governing Global Crisis: Why the G20 Summit Was Created and What We Still Need It to Do,” asserts that the G20 now needs substantial institutional reform in order to reduce the “occasionality” of its current mode of operation and to embed it more comprehensively into the work of other major global economic organizations and the activities of global civil society.

In “The G20 and Monetary Policy Stasis,” Andrew Baker begins by providing an account of the world monetary policy stasis. He then examines the role the G20 can play in overcoming this stasis through the lens of accountability, arguing that only the G20 summits have the necessary political authority to call their central banks to account and initiate a wide-ranging debate on monetary policy. A case is made for convening a monetary policy working group to discuss a range of positions, including those of the Bank for International Settlements and the International Monetary Fund, and to make recommendations, because the G20 has been most effective in displaying international financial leadership when its leaders have convened and made use of specialist working groups.

Dries Lesage, in “The Current G20 Taxation Agenda: Compliance, Accountability and Legitimacy,” analyzes recent G20 initiatives on taxation and the new G20 norm of the automatic exchange of information (AEOI) with regard to foreign accounts. After having reflected on the special relationship between the G20 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), he then considers compliance, accountability and legitimacy. In terms of compliance, the G20 is still in the phase of delivering on recent promises with regard to global standard setting. As to accountability, the G20 and the OECD already have ample experience with the peer-review process and public reporting on the G20/OECD standard of information exchange upon request. The OECD will be designated as the prime mechanism to monitor compliance on AEOI and on dealing with base erosion and profit shifting.

The collection looks at a range of issues of the global governance of sustainable development, beginning with “Governing Global Climate Change: Past Achievements, Future Prospects” by Ella Kokotsis. Following a detailed process tracing of the G7/8 summit’s 40-year history, which outlines clear surges and retreats on global climate governance, she concludes by assessing the G7/8’s accountability record on climate mitigation and offers prescriptive recom-

mentations, allowing for the delivery of a more tangible, coherent, results-driven accountability process for global climate governance.

In “Recent G8 and G20 Inclusive Multilevel Food Governance,” John J. Kirton, Caroline Bracht and Julia Kulik argue that innovative, integrative, local and business-inclusive governance for food, agriculture, nutrition, health and wealth can be strengthened through informal global institutions led by the G8 and the G20.

Marina Larionova, Mark Rakhmangulov, Andrey Sakharov and Andrey Shelepov explore in “BRICS: The Emergence of a Health Agenda” how the BRICS contribute to global health governance. They first consider the BRICS cooperation (its institutionalization, discourse and engagement with other international institutions) with a focus on health issues. They also look into the members’ national health systems, challenges and goals. The article concludes with recommendations on how implementation and accountability could strengthen the future health agenda of the BRICS and its contribution to global governance.

In “G8 Regional Security Governance through Sanctions and Force,” John Kirton and Julia Kulik trace the G7/8’s use of sanctions and force, looking into the factors that influenced decisions to resort to material sanctions in some regional conflicts but military force in others. Their study reveals that accountability mechanisms from the G7/8 itself have a variable impact in this particular area of coordination.

Maxim Starchak in “BRICS: Shared and Specific Threats to International Security” examines each member’s positions on the threats to international security that are relevant to them. He then goes on to consider their positions within the context of international organizations, such as the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly as well as several treaties, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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