The prospects of deliberative global governance in the G20: legitimacy, accountability, and public contestation

STEVEN SLAUGHTER

Abstract. This article contends that the 'G' system struggles to play a legitimate and effective role in global governance and argues that the G20 could play a important role if the forum was more publically accountable. This article argues that because of increasing forms of public contestation, the broadening agenda of the G8 and G20 and the uncertain status of global cooperation, that the legitimacy of the 'G' system is being questioned. As such, it is appropriate to consider deliberative avenues whereby public views could be considered by the G20 in a systematic way to foster forms of accountability. This consideration is animated by deliberative democracy theory and republican theory which advance a normative agenda which seeks to transform governance structures by enhancing the role of deliberation and public reasoning in political life. The article outlines the development of the 'G' system's legitimacy, considers possible modes of accountability and public involvement with respect to the G20 and examines the implications of more formalised public deliberation with respect to the G20.

Steven Slaughter is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. His main publications are *Liberty Beyond Neo-liberalism: A Republican Critique of Liberal Governance in a Globalising Age* (2005) and *Globalisation and Citizenship: The Transnational Challenge* (co-edited with Wayne Hudson 2007). His research interests include globalisation, global governance, and international political theory.

In recent decades there have been mounting questions about the legitimacy of prevailing forms of global governance and whether and to what degree individuals should be involved in global governance. The main questions have been whether the prevailing forms of cooperation and governance have been effective in managing the economic dimensions of globalisation, effective in addressing the social dimensions of globalisation – especially in respect to poverty and ecological degradation, and whether the organs of global governance have considered the voices of those affected by the decisions of these organs. The G8 (the Group of Eight) and the G20 (the Group of Twenty) forums of governance have been at the centre of these issues.[1] The 'G' system has its origins in the 1970s when the leading industrialised democracies created the G6, G7, then the G8 as an annual forum for executive level deliberations to manage emerging forms of globalisation. The G20 has its origins as a forum for finance ministers in the late 1990s in response to the instability in the global financial

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[1] A. Cooper, 'The G20 as an Improvised Crisis Committee and/or a Contested "Steering Committee" for the World', *International Affairs*, 86:3 (2010), p. 742.

system. The role of the G20 has continued to grow and formally replaced the G8 as the preeminent site for executive level deliberation in 2009.

This article contends that the G20 struggles to play a legitimate and effective role in global governance. While the 'G' system was originally designed to operate outside the formal deliberations of established multilateral diplomacy, public contestation has become an unavoidable element of contemporary global governance.[2] Furthermore, the 'G' system has continued to grow in significance. While the 'G' system originally focused on economic issues, it has increasingly addressed a range of non-economic issues such as terrorism, global warming, and global health.[3] Despite this significance, and despite demonstrating signs of effectiveness in response to the Global Financial Crisis, the future of the G20 is far from certain in an environment lacking the galvanising need to collaborate to address an immediate global financial crisis or widespread willingness of member states to address broader global social issues.[4] This article argues that because of these increasing forms of public contestation, the broadening agenda of the G8 and G20, and the uncertain status of global cooperation, that the legitimacy of the 'G' system is being called into question. The increasing impact of the 'G' system on individuals around the world is leading to a growing sentiment that the G8 and now the G20 should be involved in addressing global issues. The argument here is that the G20 *could* play an important role if the forum was more publically accountable. Greater avenues for public participation and accountability would strengthen the public legitimacy of the G20 and increase its capacity to be a forum that can address global problems and manage transnational connections in a productive fashion. As such, it is appropriate to consider deliberative avenues whereby public views could be considered by the G20 in a systematic way to foster forms of accountability.

This consideration is animated by critical deliberative democratic theory and the associated theories of neo-roman republicanism and discursive democracy which advance a normative agenda which seeks to transform governance structures by enhancing the role of deliberation and public reasoning in political life.[5] This normative consideration is also inherently pragmatic in that it considers the practical obstacles and limits to deliberation and public participation in specific concrete political situations. Critical deliberative theorists focused on global governance tend to work with the institutions 'we have' rather than argue for grand systems of global representative democracy so as to identify possible pathways and latent potential for political change.[6] The question here is how deliberation could constitute forms of public reflection in respect to the G20. While it is the case that the G20, like most forms of global governance, has a 'multiplicity of audiences', the argument here is that the G20 could act as what deliberative theorist Randall Germain terms an 'institutional

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[2] Robert O'Brien, et al. (eds) *Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[3] Hugo Dobson, *The Group of 7/8* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 60.

[4] *Financial Times*, 'A Bad Year for Global Governance' (29 December 2010).

[5] James Brassett and William Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance: Liberal, Cosmopolitan and Critical Perspectives', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 22:1 (2008), pp. 69–92; Randall Germain, 'Financial Governance and Transnational Deliberative Democracy', *Review of International Studies*, 36:2 (2010), pp. 493–509; Philip Petitt, 'Deliberative Democracy, the Discursive Dilemma, and Republican Theory', in James. Fishkin and Peter. Laslett (eds), *Debating Deliberative Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 138–62; John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

[6] Brassett and Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance', p. 84.

anchor';[7] a locus that creates public spheres constituted by deliberation between member states of the G20, domestic societies of those member states, and transnational civil society. This article advances the idea of deliberative accountability as an institutional framework for a forum like the G20 to be a place where leaders give reasons for joint declarations and decisions as well as being responsive to various public inputs. The concept of accountability is an appropriate mechanism to demonstrate how deliberation relates to legitimacy and authority in respect to multiple publics.

The argument that deliberation and accountability will enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G20 will proceed through four steps. First, the development of the 'G' system in light of the context of its legitimacy and the increasing role of NGOs and social movements will be considered. Second, possible modes of public accountability will be explored. Third, a deliberative conception of accountability will be developed and the key theoretical problems of more formalised public deliberation will be considered. Fourth, some of the practical problems of public accountability with respect to the legitimacy of the G20 will be scrutinised.

The 'G' system and legitimacy

The 'G' system of forums are reoccurring diplomatic summits involving the executive leaders of member states and key International Organisations (IOs). It is important from the outset to indicate that the 'G' system of forums have been established outside the normal protocols of international law and have no constitution, ongoing secretariat or budget, and thus no capacity to act independently of its member states. As such, these meetings involve dialogue regarding issues of mutual concern with each meeting being chaired by the country hosting the summit which also has the responsibility for setting out an agenda in consultation with other members. The leaders of member states of the G20 articulate a consensus in a formal *communiqué* issued at the end of meetings in the form of a broad strategy that may be implemented in the policies of member states or IOs. The initial focus of the 'G' system was upon the increasing impact of economic interdependence during the 1970s – especially the macroeconomic impact of the oil crises. This role has encompassed addressing the policy implications of economic interdependence as well as addressing public expectations and fears regarding interdependence and globalisation.[8] As such, the G7/8's management of global integration encompasses both the policy coordination of its political leaders and efforts to publicly legitimise economic globalisation.

The 'G' system plays a series of significant roles in global governance. First, the 'G' system is an executive level forum that can swiftly coordinate international responses to urgent global economic problems by acting as a forum for 'crisis diplomacy'.[9] This is evident in that the G system has been rising in significance within the structures of global governance and has increasingly played the coordinating role of being the 'plate spinner' which acts as a forum that directs other bodies

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[7] Germain, 'Financial Governance', p. 501.
[8] Nicholas Bayne, 'The G8 and the Globalisation Challenge', Paper presented at the Academic Symposium G8 2000 (Okinawa, 2000).
[9] Cooper, 'The G20', p. 747.

like the UN, WTO, IMF, and World Bank.[10] This is evident in the way the G20 has become the central body for responding to the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and 2009, especially in the form of G20 efforts to coordinate new financial resources from its member states to the IMF in 2009.[11] In addition to providing the background cooperation required for globalisation to exist, the G system also provides an executive level forum to discuss the immediate implications of 'common systemic problems'.[12] The G20 forum of finance ministers and central bank governors emerged as a response to the Asian Financial Crisis of the late 1990s, and the development of the G20 world leader's forum was a response to the Global Financial Crisis. This demonstrates that the G system is adaptable to changing dynamics in the global economy. The development of the G20 also shows a willingness to include emerging economies that are rising in economic and political significance.[13] Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that across the history of the 'G' system – including the newly formed G20 forum – 'the majority of regulatory power and decision-making' remains with member states.[14]

Second, although it is often decried as little more than a glorified photo opportunity, the G8 and the G20 represent significant sites for 'informal' consensus formation by participating leaders. In ideological terms these processes of consensus formation are especially important because while the G8 and G20 attempt to coordinate policies among member states – often with mixed results and various disagreements and tensions – it also inculcates states and institutions into ideologies and discourses which emphasise capitalist and neo-liberal principles.[15] In addition, authors from the perspective of critical political economy make the point that there are hegemonic connections between the G8 and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), both in the terms of the 'jurisdiction' of these institutions as well as their personnel.[16] Cox refers to the institutions that support global capitalism as undertaking a 'transnational process of consensus formation among the official caretakers of the global economy'.[17] In this view the 'G' system of institutions is a powerful hub of policy coordination and consensus building involving the leaders of powerful states. Questions remain as to the power of dominant states like the US in the G20, but the broadening membership of the G20 points to new forms of cooperation paralleling the dominance of the US and transnational capitalism.[18]

Third, the 'G' system also embodies a site for institution building and adaptation. During the 1990s, the 'G' system engaged in a process of international institutional reform. The G8's internal institutional adaptation led to the creation of the G20. This adaption was aimed at responding to emerging problems and to promote 'financial

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10 Dobson, *The Group of 7/8*, p. 89.
11 Cooper, 'The G20', p. 741.
12 M. Beeson and S. Bell, 'The G20 and International Economic Governance: Hegemony, Collectivism or Both?', *Global Governance*, 15:1 (2009), p. 67.
13 Cooper, 'The G20', p. 743.
14 Michael Hammer, 'The time is now', *One World Trust Briefing Paper*, 118 (2009), p. 1. See also Dobson, 'The Group of 7/8', p. 34.
15 Beeson and Bell, 'The G20 and International Economic Governance', p. 69.
16 Robert Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 301.
17 Ibid.
18 Beeson and Bell, 'The G20 and International Economic Governance', pp. 81–2. See also Cooper, 'The G20'.

stability'.[19] The G8 sought to head off criticism that it is an unrepresentative clique by developing the G20 forum of finance ministers and central bank governors that was formally created at the 25 September 1999 meeting of the G7 Finance Ministers. According to the G7 Finance Ministers, the G20 was created 'as a new mechanism for informal dialogue in the framework of the Bretton Woods institutional system, to broaden the dialogue on key economic and financial policy issues among systemically significant economies and to promote cooperation to achieve stable and sustainable world growth that benefits all'.[20] While the G20 finance ministers have met regularly since 1999, in 2008 the executive leaders of the G20 countries met for this first time and in 2009 it was announced that the G20 had replaced the G8 as the central forum for executive level deliberations. This demonstrates that dominant states regarded prevailing institutional forums – including the G8 – as inadequate,[21] as well as demonstrating a form of institutional flexibility that other international institutions do not possess.

Lastly, while the 'G' system has a clear focus on economic issues it also has addressed a range of non-economic issues ranging from terrorism, global warming, and global health – with mixed results. Despite this broadening agenda, the 'G' system has played an important role in articulating and legitimating neo-liberal principles in light of its primary focus on global financial issues. However, the potential of the G20 to address an array of issues broader than promoting global capitalism, or coordinating responses to economic crises, points to the potential significance of creating and sustaining a body that plays a coordinating role in global governance that extends to social issues and promotes global public goods. Managing such social issues appears to be growing in importance not just because such issues have economic implications, but because addressing these social issues is crucial to the legitimacy of the G20 and global governance. In practical terms it is important to have an executive level forum in global governance that considers how different policy regimes intersect.[22] This includes questions regarding how economic policy regimes intersect with environmental and human rights regimes, as well as how the agendas of different international institutions intersect. There is a sense that the G20 fulfils a glaring gap in global cooperation. That is, we urgently require an executive level forum that promotes policy coordination which can address and adapt to the world's economic and social problems. Indeed the broadening agenda and the expanding membership of the G system demonstrate that one of the strengths of the G system has been that it is flexible and adaptive.

Throughout the development of the 'G' system there have been questions surrounding the legitimacy and appropriateness of the various forums.[23] While the transformation of the 'G' system from the G8 to the G20 is evidence of a considerable broadening of representation at these executive level forums, questions still persist as to the legitimacy of 'G' system membership and deliberations in light of the alleged elitism and exclusivity of this system of forums. The legitimacy of the 'G' system is

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[19] John Kirton, *What is the G20?* Paper presented at an International Think Tank Forum on 'China in the Twenty-First Century' (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999).

[20] *G7*, 'Statement of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors', Washington (25 September 1999).

[21] Cooper, 'The G20', p. 748.

[22] Ibid., p. 756.

[23] Dobson, 'The Group of 7/8', p. 84.

incongruous. On one hand the 'G' system is very much sensitive to its standing among states – especially when responding to crises there is an awareness of the importance of including important stakeholders and being seen to be inclusive. The formation of the G20 demonstrates that the G8 was not deemed legitimate in terms of membership given that only a small range of states were included. The G20 also demonstrated that the G8 did not represent enough states to be able to manage globalisation given the changing balance of power and wealth evident in rise of China, India, and other emerging economies. Furthermore some G20 states are involved in 'outreach' programmes whereby member states of the G20 consult with non-G20 members in their region.[24] However, on the other hand the 'G' system has traditionally demonstrated little systematic regard for the public opinion of member states or transnational NGOs. Furthermore, the G20 has offered few structures for public engagement of the public's of member states or NGOs.[25] In short, avenues of public participation, consultation, or input into the 'G' system have been minimal.

Much of the issue of legitimacy relates to the question of what public or community is an actor meant to be acceptable and appropriate to.[26] If an institution lacks legitimacy, 'then their claims to authority are unfounded' and the operation of the institution does not have support by the relevant actors.[27] A lack of legitimacy for an organisation can produce a range of social costs which can adversely affect the power, effectiveness, and efficiency of an organisation.[28] Legitimacy is an 'inherently social' phenomena which requires interaction and dialogue where 'for an actor or institution to be judged legitimate, its identity, interests, or practices must resonate with values considered normative by other actors within their realm of political action'.[29] In world politics the question of who are the relevant actors or constituency is not given nor fixed. We could speak of the international legitimacy of an international organisation with respect to the states in the international system, and public legitimacy with respect to the public of states that create and support the organisation in question, or with respect to the networks of NGOs and social movements that comprise an emerging global public sphere. The importance of various constituencies of legitimacy for a given institution also can change over time.[30] While international legitimacy and public legitimacy are crucial to organs of global governance, the importance of the latter form of legitimation has risen in significance as people are increasingly questioning the legitimacy and appropriateness of the decisions and power of international organisations,[31] evident in the high profile public protests against the WTO, IMF, G8, and G20.

These dynamics of the public contestation of global governance are especially important in respect to the G8 and G20. Not only has the 'G' system been rising in significance within the structures of global governance but it has also increasingly

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[24] A. Cooper and C. Bradford, *The G20 and the Post-Crisis Economic Order* (Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), p. 11.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ian Clark, 'Legitimacy in a Global Order', *Review of International Studies*, 29 (2003), p. 95; and Jonathan Symons, 'The legitimation of international organisations: examining the identity of the communities that grant legitimacy', *Review of International Studies*, 37.SI (2011).

[27] Allen Buchanan and Robert O. Keohane, 'The Legitimacy of Global Governance Institutions', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 20:4 (2006), p. 407.

[28] Christian Reus-Smit, 'International Crises of Legitimacy', *International Politics*, 44 (2007), pp. 163–5.

[29] Ibid., pp. 171–2.

[30] Symons, 'The legitimation of international organisations', pp. 14–15.

[31] Ibid.; Clark, 'Legitimacy', p. 95.

played the coordinating role of 'plate spinner' which directs other global governance organs. As such, G8 meetings since the late 1990s and now G20 meetings have become beacons for civil society activism of the anti capitalist movement and beyond. Furthermore, the rising public awareness of the G20 has been met with relatively few avenues for participation or engagement with the G20. Thus the growing significance and power of global governance forums like the G8 and G20 point to a fundamental 'democratic deficit' existing in the sense that is unclear how accountable and responsive these bodies are to the people affected by their decisions.[32] The growing significance of NGOs and social movements is a response to this representation and accountability deficit and the lack of existing avenues for participation in global governance. Not only are states and IOs not alone in making political decisions, they increasingly have to interact with NGOs in order to work effectively and legitimately.[33]

These forms of public contestation are not only about the legitimacy of global governance bodies like the G8 or G20, but more profoundly, the question of *what* principles of legitimacy should exist in global politics. As Ian Clark indicates in respect to the politics of resistance and governance, 'actors within the global order are searching for, and competing about, the principles of legitimacy that deserve respect'.[34] Crucially, the participation of NGOs and individuals are significantly involved in this ongoing process of legitimation. The significance of NGOs are thus both a symptom of the questionable legitimacy of global governance and one important means scholars suggest the legitimacy of global governance could be actually enhanced. The argument developed here is that the public legitimacy of the G20 is important and this is significantly influenced and conditioned by the existence and operation of NGOs and social movements within member states and in transnational civil society. Tightly wound up with the public legitimacy of institutions like the G8 or G20 is the question of accountability: how should the G20 be answerable for its actions and to whom should the G20 be responsible to? As such, accountability is emerging as one of the 'principles of legitimacy' in contemporary global politics.

Accountability and the G20

However, accountability with respect to global governance is extremely difficult to achieve because of the decentralised nature of international politics.[35] Nevertheless, Robert Keohane claims that, despite this, efforts need to be mounted to promote accountability where possible and 'we need urgently to seek innovative ways to hold potential abusers of power, at a global level, to account; otherwise, we risk discrediting global governance and fostering a reversion to national sovereignty, with disastrous consequences for cooperation, for peace, and for our own prosperity and personal security'.[36] The accountability of global governance bodies is conditioned by the question of who should they be accountable to. As is the case with legitimacy in global politics, the actual constituency that forums like the G20 should be

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[32] David Held, 'Reframing Global Governance: Apocalypse soon or reform!', *New Political Economy*, 11:2 (2006), p. 166.
[33] M. Blagescu, L. de las Casas, and R. Lloyd, *Pathways to Accountability: The GAP Framework* (London: One World Trust, 2005), p. 13.
[34] Clark, 'Legitimacy', p. 94.
[35] Robert Keohane, 'Accountability in World Politics', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 29:2 (2006), p. 78.
[36] Ibid.

accountable to is not clear. Keohane indentifies two forms of accountability in this respect: the 'internal accountability' of an organisation to the people who created the organisation (that is, the shareholders in a case of business), and the 'external accountability' to those affected by the actions of an organisations (the stakeholders in a case of business).[37] In articulating these forms of accountability, Keohane emphasises that accountability is essentially a 'power relationship' where people constrain the authority and discretion of an organisation.[38] Keohane's view of accountability, although well developed, appears to be too limited in some respects. The demarcation between 'internal' and 'external' accountability appears to not map well with the ambiguity of these categories in global politics. Keohane's earlier articulation of 'transnational accountability' is a potentially important qualification which unpacks the nature of 'external' accountability to focus upon the role of NGOs in prompting accountability.[39]

Following on from Keohane, there are three forms of public constituency to whom G20 deliberations could be seen to be accountable. First, in a direct sense we could say that there is a strict sense of national accountability where individual leaders of the G20 should be accountable to the public's of their own states. This corresponds with Robert Keohane's conception of 'internal' accountability where it is the public that delegates responsibility to leaders within the G20 and in doing so develops a formalised sense that their voices be systematically considered. This could be through the electoral processes of the state or through parliament oversight of the foreign affairs functions of government. Even this conception of formal accountability is problematic in terms of actual effective accountability with respect to the G20, as will be discussed. However, an even larger problem exists with this formal view given that the influence of the 'G' systems deliberations has an impact on people beyond just the participating leader's states.

Thus a second broader sense of cosmopolitan accountability could be said to exist where the constituency of the global governance organ is defined by impact rather than formal responsibility to a particular community. This relates to Keohane's conception of 'external' accountability. The cosmopolitan sense of accountability seeks to create procedures to ensure that deliberations by leaders in the G20 are responsive to those actually and foreseeably impacted by its determinations. This requires developing mechanisms for a direct voice for people excluded from national modes of accountability. As Daniele Archibugi claims in regards to the G20 meeting in 2009:

How does that one third of the world population whose state representatives have not even been invited to the Summit feel about it? A good 173 countries in the world have been left out and can only wait and see what is decided in London. We are talking about one third of the world population which has all the problems of the other two thirds and often many more, but in this case have no voice.[40]

It must be stressed that the G20 is aware of these global ramifications and does have a global intent. The 2009 G20 London Summit *Leaders' Statement* claims that 'our global plan for recovery must have at its heart the needs and jobs of hard-working

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[37] Ibid., p. 79.
[38] Ibid. See also Robert Keohane, 'Global Governance and Democratic Accountability', in David. Held and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (eds), *Taming Globalization: Frontiers of Governance* (London: Polity Press, 2003), pp. 130–59.
[39] Ibid., p. 143.
[40] Daniele Archibugi, 'The G20 ought to be increased to 6 Billion', *openDemocracy* (London, 2009).

families, not just in developed countries but in emerging markets and the poorest countries of the world too; and must reflect the interests, not just of today's population, but of future generations too'.[41]

Nevertheless, accountability is not only about intent. Rather it refers fundamentally to whether there are institutions and procedures that enable stakeholders to promote responsibility on the part of the agency in question. Consequently, the 'G' system has manifestly failed to move toward this form of accountability given the exclusions that Archibugi points to. This exclusion significantly affects the capacity of global governance organs to be effective at promoting the public goods that the *communiqués* of the G8 and G20 regularly express. So when the G20 makes promises in regards to Africa, for example, the people of Africa have no formal way of demanding that the G20 be responsible for ensuring that these undertakings are upheld, or be responsive to input by African's for future promises by the G20. Nevertheless, there are apparent problems with efforts to institutionalise cosmopolitan accountability. There are questions about the global democratic and legal institutions required to give the world's population input into bodies like the G20.[42] Very quickly it becomes apparent that the only totally inclusive and cosmopolitan forum would be a 'G192' or even a 'G6 billion' as mischievously proposed by Archibugi.[43] Also when we consider the underlying question of legitimacy, it is the case that it appears 'premature to claim that IOs *require* mass legitimacy'.[44]

Thus a third account of accountability exists with respect to Keohane's concept of transnational accountability. In this form, NGOs and social movements within transnational civil society appear to be the via media between the strict accountability of national political processes, and the idea that people affected by an institution should have a direct form of accountability. NGOs and transnational activism provides some form of proxy representative accountability – even if the representative function is not formally sanctioned by the public in states around the world.[45] NGOs have various techniques to ensure that states live up to promises that they undertake and 'name and shame' states to live up to prevailing norms articulated in international law and human rights agreements.[46] Consequently they can influence the legitimacy of states and international forums. Importantly, these actors must deplore ethical and moral argumentation to promote legal and political change because they have few other forms of power.[47] There are questions about how reliably and consistently NGOs can represent groups or causes around the world. As Clifford Bob indicates there is a range of factors influencing why NGOs support particular causes but not others and there are questions as to whether the strategic interests of NGOs distort those causes they purport to represent.[48] While they provide no formal mechanisms whereby people can have an official voice in the operation and outcomes

[41] *G20*, 'London Summit Leaders' Statement' (2 April 2009), para. 3.
[42] David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
[43] Archibugi, 'The G20'.
[44] Symons, 'The legitimation of international organisations', p. 7.
[45] John Dryzek and Simon Niemeyer, 'Discursive Representation', *American Political Science Review*, 102:4 (2008), p. 481.
[46] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell, Cornell University Press, 1998), chap. 1. See also Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance', *Global Governance*, 8:3 (2002), pp. 281–304.
[47] Keohane, 'Global Governance', p. 148.
[48] Clifford Bob, 'Merchants of Morality', *Foreign Policy*, 129 (Mar./Apr. 2002), pp. 36–45.

of global governance bodies, they nevertheless provide one of the few ways to prompt leaders in forums like the G20 to be responsible to those affected by its deliberations.

Deliberative accountability and the G20

While the question of who the G20 should be accountable to remains challenging, it is important to conceptualise accountability in a broader sense. So far accountability has been stated here in primarily a disciplinary sense. But there are other ways to systematise accountability which rest on a *different* conception of what is expected or required from the G20 forum in the sense of having a different expectation of what the G20 should be accountable for. While this article has argued that accountability is emerging as a crucial element of legitimacy, there are questions as to what forms of accountability are appropriate to ensure that the G20 is legitimate and effective. Given that the G20 is not a formal international organisation which possesses a unified agency but rather is a forum of leaders from member states, it is ultimately unhelpful to claim that the G20 should be accountable for its decisions and actions in judicial, electoral or even moral terms. As such, this article contends that Keohane's theory of accountability overemphasises the disciplinary nature of accountability and underplays the communicative aspects of accountability.

The alternative position argued for here is to develop the communicative and deliberative aspects of accountability. This is an argument to develop a form of *deliberative accountability* where there is the understanding that deliberations between the G20 leaders are sincere, transparent, and responsive to public inputs. To claim accountability of the G20 is to expect that the G20 is a suitable locus – a public place – where the leaders of the states involved can be systematically accountable for their declarations and that reasons are given for determinations. This means that the expectation of G20 summits is that the leaders involved are anticipated to give public reasons for their decisions, be responsive to public inputs from various sources and make reasonable efforts to follow up on their declarations with political action. This is where the reasonable belief could be formed that the joint declarations are authentic and transparent precursors to reflective political action rather than being a secretive or meaningless 'talk fest'. Given that the G20, like its predecessors is about developing ideas and joint strategic understandings rather than binding decisions or tactical questions of implementation,[49] the idea here is to reconsider the nature of the deliberations undertaken.

Efforts to develop deliberative accountability within the G20 rest on the notion that the existing G20 is essentially a deliberative institution; it is just that deliberation is currently narrowly limited to leaders and their advisors. While the G system has always been a 'state centric' forum,[50] the argument here is to widen this narrow form of deliberation and transform the G20 from being an executive forum to a publically engaged forum. Given the deliberative instinct which underpins this understanding of accountability, there are some practical measures that would engage world leaders in the G20 with the constituencies they represent or affect. A minimal way of expanding accountability would be to ensure that the *communiqués* of the

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49 Cooper, 'The G20', p. 756.
50 Ibid., p. 744.

G20 be treated more seriously by parliaments and parliament committees of member states as a way of holding governments to account for promises undertaken by leaders. A more responsive way of obtaining a higher level of accountability would be to enable citizen oversight panels or empowering NGOs to report on the contrast between the undertakings at G20 forums and actual government action and to explain the consequences of G20 decisions. This would involve G20 leaders responding to these public inputs. This form of accountability would go some way to make executive leaders take the G20 more seriously as a forum for policy consideration and may require a more formalised secretariat to systematise public inputs so as to enable world leaders to respond. Whatever the institutional format, public participation should be as pre-emptive as possible and not just retrospective, thereby ensuring that public input is dynamic and not merely a rubber stamp.

The key expected outcome of deliberative forms of accountability and responsiveness is enhancing the capacity of G20 leaders to learn. The practical contention that accountability is best understood in terms of responsiveness is evident in the work of the *One World Trust* – a think tank operating out of the United Kingdom. As the One World Trust indicates:

First and foremost accountability is about engaging with, and being responsive to, stakeholders; taking into consideration their needs and views in decision-making and providing an explanation as to why they were or were not taken on board. In this way, accountability is less a mechanism of control and more a process for learning. Being accountable is about being open with stakeholders, engaging with them in an ongoing dialogue and learning from the interaction. Accountability can generate ownership of decisions and projects and enhance the sustainability of activities. Ultimately it provides a pathway to better performance.[51]

This draws a clear connection between legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness. The *One World Trust* has created the Global Accountability Project (GAP) framework and applied this framework to a range of NGOs, IOs, and TNCs.[52] This framework divides accountability into four dimensions required for accountability to be robust. These elements include: 'transparency' (where an agency 'provides stakeholders with the information they need to participate in the decisions that affect them'), 'participation' (where an agency includes stakeholders in the decision-making process – not just the implementation of decisions, 'evaluation' (where an agency includes the views of stakeholders in determining the success of an agency's agenda), and 'complaint and response mechanisms' (where an agency has procedures for querying decisions and responding to grievances).[53] These elements have the capacity to enhance the capacity of leaders to learn rather than restrain.

In addition to providing a context where institutional learning can take place, this conception of accountability also directly feeds into strengthening the legitimacy of institutions that systematically attempt to be responsive to the concerns of their constituents. Reus-Smit indicates that when the legitimacy of an institution is in question – when there is a crisis of legitimacy – this can only be rectified by social and political interaction which involves a 'recalibration' of its legitimacy.[54] This 'requires some form of communicative reconciliation of the actor's or institution's social identity, interests, or practices with the normative expectations of other actors

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[51] Blagescu, et al, '*Pathways*', p. 11.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., pp. 23–4.
[54] Reus-Smit, 'International Crises', p. 172.

within its realm of political action'.[55] This demonstrates the crucial importance of communication and deliberation to legitimacy. Moreover, this also points to the importance of systematic processes of accountability for the ongoing recalibration of an institution's legitimacy. Developing systematic processes for accountability is especially important for democratic states because, 'in a democratic era, multilateral institutions will only thrive if they are viewed as legitimate by democratic publics'.[56]

The contention that accountability is best understood in terms of responsiveness rather than responsibility or representativeness is drawn from deliberative perspectives on democracy and governance. In order for the G20 to be publically responsive, the political practice of deliberation is crucial. While there are differing accounts surrounding the notion of deliberative democracy and governance – one 'common idea is that public deliberation – public reasoning about issues of shared concern – should be one of the principal ingredients of political life'.[57] Deliberative approaches disassociate deliberation from formal structures of electoral democracy and focus upon the substance and openness of dialogue rather than the institutions in which deliberation takes place. Critical deliberative democratic theory and the associated theories of neo-Roman republicanism and discursive democracy argue for the development of a political culture which enables individual citizens to engage in wide-ranging deliberation about public life with others, in a way in which their views and opinions can be modified through such public reasoning and consequently influence political decision-making.[58] Such theory contrasts with the delimited nature of liberal reformist stands of deliberation in the sense that critical approaches seek to widen the inclusivity of public participation, broaden the array of issues subject to democratic concern and ensure that public deliberation will be a significant part of decision-making processes.[59] Critical approaches also emphasise the importance and possibility that citizens can radically transform political practice because critical deliberation 'allows for the transformation of their views, their institutions, and their social contexts'.[60]

Critical deliberative democratic theory seeks to shift global governance away from technocratic models of governance that comprise a narrow band of experts and elected officials and enable transformations in the institutions and ideas comprising global governance.[61] This includes efforts to include a wider variety of ideas and voices which encompasses the possibility for transnational forms of deliberation which include all people affected by global decision-making processes. Furthermore, critical approaches seek to both develop a multiplicity of different perspectives in decision-making and widen the range of issues subject to democratic concern. As such, critical approaches seek to include wide ranging deliberation about global economic issues rather than leave these issues to experts and officials from powerful states. These wider and deeper forms of transnational deliberation seek to not just make effective decisions and strengthen the public legitimacy of decision-making structures,

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55 Ibid.
56 Buchanan and Keohane, 'Legitimacy', p. 407.
57 Brassett and Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance', p. 72 and Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics*.
58 Geoffrey Stokes, 'Critical theories of Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Citizenship', in Ethan J. Leib and Baogang He (eds), *Search for Deliberative Democracy in China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 66; and Pettit, 'Deliberative Democracy', pp. 139–40.
59 Stokes, 'Critical theories', p. 54.
60 Ibid., p. 66.
61 Germain, 'Financial Governance', p. 498.

but also create more reflexive and inclusive forms of governance.[62] Many deliberative democratic theorists contend that this form of deliberation can work beyond national forms of democracy – because of the existence of NGOs and social movements as dialogic agencies.[63] Consequently, critical deliberative democratic theory emphasises the dialogical role and capacities of NGOs and other forms of transnational activism and communication.

This form of deliberation is crucial to effective accountability and informs the account of deliberative accountability argued for in this article. Underpinning accountability of this kind is an underlying ethos of deliberation which includes a public dispensation to question authority and contest decisions which are not supported with well developed reasons.[64] Accountability is crucial to non-arbitrary governance. Indeed, the elements of accountability articulated by the *One World Trust* are all important.[65] Transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response mechanisms are all required in order for forms of global governance to be responsive to its membership and to those it affects. But these elements require a context of public deliberation. In order for accountability to be robust there must be a culture of public participation and engagement where there is mutual acknowledgment by the public and actors within organs like the G20 that deliberation will be taken seriously and reasons will be given for the making of decisions. Consequently, for this form of deliberative accountability to exist there needs to be systematic processes of communication but there does not have to be formal electoral democratic structures at a global level.

Deliberation and the possibilities of G20 accountability

While deliberative democracy does not demand electoral democratic structures it does dramatically recast the expectations we can make of global governance. Indeed, in the deliberative democracy literature there is the argument that we are witnessing an incipient process of transnational democratisation. While it is the case that the prospects for electoral democracy at a global level are weak, there are signs of emerging forms of public engagement with global and regional forms of governance.[66] These forms of engagement are democratic in a broader sense of attempting to moderate and hold authority to account.[67] Efforts to promote deliberative accountability with respect to the G20 could be seen to be consonant with this development. However, the approach of critical deliberative democracy and its associates also focuses upon the more immediate and instrumental task of democratising global governance bodies so that they make better decisions.[68] This literature attempts to offer solutions to problems of efforts to promote greater accountability. Even if we could enact transnational forms of accountability, there are theoretical questions of how the

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[62] Stokes, 'Critical theories', p. 55.
[63] Ibid., p. 68. See also Dryzek *Deliberative Global Politics*.
[64] Pettit, 'Deliberative Democracy', pp. 152–3.
[65] Blagescu, et al., 'Pathways', p. 23.
[66] John Dryzek, 'Global Democratization: Soup, Society, or System?', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 25:2 (2011), pp. 211–34. See also Robert Goodin, 'Global Democracy: In the Beginning', *International Theory*, 2:2 (2010), pp. 175–209.
[67] Goodin, 'Global Democracy', p. 179.
[68] Brassett and Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance' and Germain, 'Financial Governance'.

deliberation would operate. In response to the argument here to promote deliberative accountability with respect to the G20 there are some problems which critical deliberative democracy and associated theory offer some ways forward.

One procedural problem is how transnational NGOs observing the G20 can productively interface with democratic systems in nation states. Some deliberative theory, such as the earlier work of John Dryzek, focuses upon the creation of transnational spaces for genuine dialogue which are not necessarily institutionalised or formally connected to authority.[69] In this position the diffuse influence of deliberation is via the discourses within transnational civil society, so national democratic systems and incipient forms of transnational democracy overlap. This view can be criticised for not having any systematic means for incorporating citizen views into global governance or have means by which current international bodies could be formally accountable for their decisions. Other deliberative scholars emphasise the importance of having institutions to ensure that deliberation has a focus and the capacity of being a core decision-making process.[70] The question remains how transnational actors could interact with national democratic processes.

A republican consideration of this issue sees a productive interface between national democratic processes and transnational actors. Phillip Pettit, a leading exponent of neo-republican thought, advances the idea of 'contestatory democracy' where citizens of a putative republican state have both 'authorial' and 'editorial' powers in relation to government.[71] Authorial power encompasses the public selection of representatives, while editorial power includes measures that keep the actions of government transparent and accountable in order to promote common interests. Such oversight would include expected procedures such as freedom of information provisions, a range of consultative measures that include petitions and public committees, and an ability to appeal and reshape law via direct referenda. Pettit's account of contestatory democracy emphasises the role of deliberation in a republican conception of government which considers public issues in a transparent way.[72] While republicanism cannot be seen to animate a global democracy, the republican conception of contestatory democracy offers grounds to bridge the 'democratic deficit' that exists in contemporary global governance. Pettit claims that when we look at democracy purely in a representative sense, the power of international institutions over the democratic state looks disruptive, but if we look at democracy in a contestatory way we can identify avenues which extend the opportunities for citizens to hold governments to account.[73] Not only would principles of deliberation and contestation be able to extend to government policies within global governance bodies like the G20, but contestatory democracy opens up the possibility that citizens could appeal to international forums like the G20 or transnational NGOs when state leaders fail to uphold their declared obligations.[74]

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[69] Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics*, p. 154.
[70] Brassett and Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance', p. 72. See also Germain, 'Financial Governance', p. 499.
[71] Phillip Pettit, 'Republican Freedom and Contestatory Democratization', in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds), *Democracy's Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 163–90.
[72] Pettit, 'Deliberative Democracy'.
[73] Philip Pettit, 'Two-dimensional Democracy, National and International', *IILJ Working Paper*, 8 (2005), pp. 14–15.
[74] Ibid., pp. 16–20.

A second substantive problem is that there are questions as to what voices from the various public inputs would the G20 actually be responsive to. How significantly would radical voices from various publics be considered by leaders of the G20? There are clear reasons to doubt the input of radical voices into the G20 given the G system's history of prioritising capitalist and neo-liberal ideas. Nevertheless deliberative accountability means at minimum there will be reasons given for supporting such ideas and rejecting anti-capitalist ideas and discourses. It is important to see that even with respect to national publics, that to the extent that G20 leaders privilege neo-liberal ideas and not engage with alternatives, that they disenfranchise those sections of their populations who do not subscribe to those ideas and principles. Furthermore, while there are critics of neo-liberalism who are not supportive of G20 directed attempts to stabilise global capitalism, deliberative accountability seeks to provide more equal footing for wider ranges of people and groups to have discussions about the future of global capitalism. The potential for dire human costs of deepening global financial, social, and ecological crises leads to a support for the idea that there is the need to have more wide ranging discussions about the nature of global capitalism and global governance rather than have no effective global governance. A more deliberative G20 could be one suitable place for such discussions.

There are also questions about the ways that NGOs can distort or coopt the causes that NGOs seek to represent.[75] Critical deliberative approaches make no claim that NGOs are perfect in this regard, but claim that by bringing particular voices and discourses into global governance bodies they provide a crucial political function. Critical deliberative approaches seek to build upon this development. John Dryzek's position of discursive democracy identifies a way of representing discourses such as neo-liberalism, environmentalism, and social justice, for example.[76] This branch of deliberative democracy theory claims that in some contexts it is more possible to evenly represent the extant discourses of a given public than people, maybe even having a 'Chamber of Discourses' to rest alongside electoral forms of representation.[77] Even in an informal sense the current role of NGOs as democratic representers of discourses could play a democratic role:

> Is the world any more democratic for their activities? Clearly, yes, the international governmental institutions they target now have to justify their activities in light of a variety of discourses, whereas previously they either felt no need to justify at all, or did so in narrowly economistic and administrative terms. Thus, the idea of discursive representation provides democratic validation for the activities of NGOs and other transnational activists.[78]

Although there are practical questions with respect to who represents discourses and how these representers are selected, this form of democracy has considerable merit. While the core goal of deliberative accountability is the more modest goal of ensuring deliberations are sincere, transparent, and responsive so as to improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G20, discursive representation identifies a systematic way of representing a wider array of perspectives. Whether discourses are represented formally or not, deliberative approaches systematically widen the circle of voices involved in political practice.

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[75] Bob, 'Merchants of Morality'.
[76] Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics*.
[77] Dryzek and Niemeyer, 'Discursive Representation', p. 485.
[78] Ibid., p. 491.

A third and most important problem is considering how various public constituencies of deliberation and accountability intersect with each other. Keohane argues for a 'pluralistic accountability system' which supports various types of accountability given the decentralised and pluralist nature of governance in world politics.[79] This is justifiable in a practical sense as national accountability to the publics of member states, cosmopolitan accountability to those affected, or the transnational accountability of NGOs and social movements are all imperfect but all better than no public accountability at all. Given the difficulty of developing accountable or democratic structures in world politics, all forms of accountability should be encouraged in order to develop overlapping structures than enable various forms of public engagement which aspires to encourage leaders at G20 meetings to be more responsive for the declarations they make. However, the central problem within the array of different forms of accountability is which form of accountability should be dominant in cases of differences between these forms? As Keohane indicates, the central problem of accountability is not whether accountability mechanisms exist but whom should these mechanisms be accountable to.[80] Which constituency of accountability should be overriding? This question is a practical and normative question – whose voice should prevail when there is clash between national, cosmopolitan, and transnational forms of accountability?

In contrast, deliberative theory can be seen to provide a productive account of how national accountability can intersect with transnational and cosmopolitan forms of accountability in respect to the G20. An important implication drawn from the deliberative approach is that deliberation is not just a matter of shaping policies and institutions but also plays a key role in the creation and transformation of publics and public spheres. A public sphere and the notion of 'publicness' relates to a domain of information, debate, and effect that transcends institutions.[81] Accountability moves a public constituency away from a 'weak' conception of being public which rests upon a moral influence, to a stronger conception of being public which entails a systematic political influence where formal reasons are given for decisions.[82] Importantly, deliberative scholars emphasise that deliberation not only constitutes and creates specific publics and public spheres but also that deliberation can actually *transform* these conceptions.[83] In reference to the multiplicity of publics that relate to the accountability of the G20, it is apparent that deliberation would challenge any notion that national, cosmopolitan, and transnational forms of public are hermetically sealed. Instead deliberation opens up the possibility for agents to draw upon other publics for information or resources to hold leaders to account. While the further development of cosmopolitan and transnational public spheres would be an important advance in global politics, the development of deliberative inspired national public spheres within G20 member states which seek to hold their leaders to account would also be a significant development.

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[79] Keohane, 'Accountability', p. 84.
[80] Keohane, 'Global Governance', p. 146.
[81] Brassett and Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Governance', p. 499.
[82] Ibid., pp. 500–1.
[83] James Brassett and William Smith, 'Deliberation and Global Civil Society: Agency, Arena, Affect', *Review of International Studies*, 36:2 (2010), p. 422.

Deliberation within a national public sphere could open up a significant array of possibilities. This could mean that citizens of a nation state ensure that their parliaments are playing a reasonable and productive role that intersects with a cosmopolitan perspective or is receptive to the views of NGOs. Such policymaking could require parliaments and citizens to consider the welfare of people who live in other states. This means that effective public scrutiny of G20 deliberation will have to come from citizens operating within their domestic political systems, and in the formation and operation of NGO and social movements in the form of transnational accountability, which provides agency to excluded voices and some capacity to attempt to hold the G20 and its member states to their declarations. What is possible given the importance of deliberation to accountability and the rising profile of NGOs is that NGOs could, over time, introduce cosmopolitan concerns into national forms of accountability. Once citizens are considering national accountability more fully there will be greater opportunities for transnational NGOs to intrude into national deliberations. Although imperfect, the existence of transnational civil society offers strong opportunity for enhanced accountability and deliberative governance both in terms of being able to play a role 'educating publics about the nature and terms of dominant discourses' but also as an 'affective arena' able to shape perceptions of key global issues by virtue of the diversity of political perspectives within this arena.[84] Nevertheless, we need to build upon existing forms of accountability as well as develop new forms of accountability wherever possible. While augmented forms of accountability and deliberation with respect to the G20 will not automatically solve global problems like climate change, they will enable faster forms of learning and a more reflective consideration of international policymaking.

Globalisation and the limitations of G20 accountability

It is naïve to suggest that cosmopolitan or transnational accountability will be manifest in the near term to hold states accountable in a way that supplants the formal accountability of a G20 state's government to its public.[85] Nevertheless, it is equally naïve to suggest that the G20, and global governance more generally, can maintain legitimacy in a globalising world without engaging in mutual communication with transnational actors and those people around the world affected by G20 decision-making. Furthermore, while the G20 has demonstrated its capacity to be an effective 'crisis committee' in the face of global crises, there are fears that international cooperation 'could subside without collective purpose.[86] Such collective purpose should not be generated only by global emergencies but also by public inputs and deliberations. Deliberative accountability is one measure that could strengthen the G20's capacity to be a forum able to pre-empt global problems.

Hence it is important to consider some serious practical limitations to these conceptions of accountability in respect to the G20. First, the most immediate and overarching challenge to making the G20 more accountable is the designed separation of the 'G' system from public attention. From the outset the deliberation of the

[84] Ibid., p. 418. See also Keck and Sikkink, '*Activists*', chap. 1.
[85] Keohane, 'Global Governance', p. 152.
[86] Cooper and Bradford, *The G20*, p. 5.

various summits were designed to be outside public view.[87] The discussions of leaders at these forums are informal and more about ideas and aspiration than concrete processes and outcomes. However, the purposefully secretive and unaccountable nature of the 'G' system forums could be considered to be positive and 'the point' of 'G' system meetings. The informal nature of the 'G' system could be the reason that world leaders actively participate and use these forums to attempt to develop responses to global problems. So the counterpoint to attempts to develop greater form of accountability is that we should avoid undermining the reason that the 'G' system exists. A response to this claim is that the type of accountability argued for here is focused upon communication and learning and is not trying to hold all of the leaders of member states morally and legally responsible for every public utterance. Furthermore, given the importance and sensitivity of global forms of integration, it is difficult to see how the G20 can persist in being an informal and casual forum in global governance.[88] The influence that the G system has exerted and the possibility that the G20 could address global problems and provide global public goods means that the G20 needs to be legitimate in order to be effective. This means that significant forms of accountability will be required – even if this puts G20 deliberations under more formalised scrutiny.

In addition, there are examples where 'G' leaders have used their influence to articulate a purpose or agenda not stemming from a narrow self-interested conception of their national interests, but an agenda stemming from their national constituency or transnational activism. This has happened most often by leaders who are those chairing a meeting of the G8 or G20 and use their agenda setting discretion to advance particular issues which often go beyond the economic agenda of the 'G' system.[89] A high profile example of this occurred at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 meeting when the British prime minister Tony Blair advanced the issue of poverty in Africa. This was a result of the *Make Poverty History Campaign* which included the Live8 concerts conducted around the world on 2 July 2005. On the 7 July the G8 leaders pledged to increase levels of aid to poor nations from US $25 to US $50 billion by 2010 with half of this money going to Africa.[90] So the G8 could be seen to be responsive here, but given the funds have not been fully articulated, the issue remains as to how the leaders of the G8 can be held to these commitments. Nevertheless, this points to the latent potential of the G20 to be a forum that addresses global social problems.

Secondly, efforts to promote national accountability can be considered problematic because there are significant questions about the sufficiency of parliamentary democracy to keep leaders to account for their commitments at G8 or G20 meetings. It is no longer reasonable to claim that states are able to exercise unrestricted authority within their territory given the rising salience of transnational interconnections.[91] There is also evidence that in many countries, parliaments or parliamentary committees do not have sustained processes to keep leaders at 'G' system meetings to account. Furthermore, the capacity of such measures to be proactive and not reactive

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[87] Dobson, *The group of 7/8*, pp. 82–3.
[88] Cooper, 'The G20', p. 756.
[89] Ibid., pp. 85–6.
[90] *G8*, 'Gleneagles Communique on Africa, Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Development' (8 July 2005), sections 27 and 28.
[91] Keohane, 'Global Governance', p. 130.

is doubtful. As Michael Hammer, drawing on the research of the *One World Trust* in several countries, claims 'today, Parliaments mostly lack the capacity and established mechanisms that would enable them to conduct effective oversight of government action and progress on the G20 programme of work'.[92] Thus even in the strict sense of national accountability there currently appear to be limitations to developing stronger forms of accountability. This points to the need to consider deliberative forms of political practice and also consider further forms of accountability that exist outside of existing systems of formal parliamentary oversight.

Third, accountability is difficult to maintain because some countries may have domestic political constituencies or a political history that demonstrates a reluctance to engage with global governance in respect to particular issues, or indeed with establishing systematic forms of accountability. It is important to be aware of the limitations of the power and discretion of leaders operating in summits of the G8 and G20. Essentially the public or particular constituencies within particular states can play a blocking role to their states' contribution to international efforts to address specific issues, or to strengthen global commitments or governance structures to address these issues. While most countries have a reasonable level of public support for global governance, especially as globalisation continues to tie countries together in practical terms, such support is by no means guaranteed – especially in times of economic hardship. Also, some G20 member states clearly do not possess a political culture which embraces democratic or civil society practices and are, therefore, unlikely to immediately embrace accountability of their leaders – even in a deliberative form. In essence, like most forms of cooperation, the G8 or G20 tends to be limited by its members, and efforts to promote deliberative accountability may not be consistent across member states. Nevertheless, because all member states of the G20 have a strong vested interest in benefitting from the *status quo*, they have an underlying interest in stabilising globalisation and thus it is crucial that global governance forums like the G20 exist and have a strong degree of public legitimacy.

While public deliberation underpins the account developed here, concerns remain over the prospects of public deliberation and accountability in global politics. In particular, even those supportive of the deliberative approach agree that deliberation should not undermine effective action and cooperation in forums like the G20. The nub of this concern is how can we 'widen the circle of stakeholders sufficiently to promote a healthy dialogue' in a way 'that does not impede effective action'.[93] In addition, the public legitimacy of the G20 should not undermine the international legitimacy of states in global politics. While it is the case that international legitimacy depends upon public legitimacy and support, it remains the case that some member states of the G20 will not support greater forms of accountability and that some states outside the G20 will remain concerned about the exclusion of many states. This article has sought to counter these concerns by focusing upon the notion of deliberative accountability, which seeks to create systematic forms of responsiveness on the part of world leaders that goes beyond citizens or NGOs merely putting moral pressure on G20 leaders – but falling short of judicial accountability. The expectation here is that international legitimacy would be enhanced by increased public legitimacy within member states of the G20 and entrenching the G20 more into these

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[92] Hammer, 'The time is now', p. 1.
[93] Germain, 'Financial Governance', p. 509.

societies. Deliberative accountability could also enable the creation of overlapping public spheres which would create opportunities for the consideration of views of those outside the G20 states – as discussed above. Not all states will accept the same forms of deliberation and accountability. The forms of public deliberation argued for here should augment and not undermine the capacity of the G20 to respond to global problems.

Conclusion

The central argument of this article is that the G20 could be developed as a site for public deliberation – an 'institutional anchor' – for overlapping forms of deliberative accountability. The central benefit of this accountability would be to strengthen the public legitimacy of the G20. Without avenues of accountability, questions regarding the suitability and future of the G20 will likely continue and increase. Deliberative accountability can guide G20 leaders to make better decisions which take account of wider sources of information and voices. The key element of deliberative accountability is the idea of responsiveness – that G20 leaders should be responsive in terms of giving reasons for policy direction, respond to public inputs and be willing to learn from the social impact of G20 determinations. This avoids the shadowy nature of the deliberations of the 'G' system across its variegated history. Such a call for greater accountability implies the development of a more formal G20 which could well involve the formation of an ongoing secretariat. Indeed, the expanding ambit and increasing impact of the G20 and the potential of world leaders to address global problems are too significant for the G20 to merely be a shadowy and informal 'talk fest'. The G20's 'plate spinning' role of policy coordination remains absolutely crucial to effective global governance as there especially needs to be consideration of policy coordination of governments around the world where various policy regimes intersect. Executive level policy deliberation and coordination will continue to grow in importance with deepening economic and social integration.

Nevertheless both accountability and deliberation are difficult of foster on national, cosmopolitan, and transnational scales. This article has indicated a series of challenging questions that critical deliberative approaches are attempting to address. These problems include considering how various forms of deliberation and accountability intersect with each other to shape international institutions and policies, how transnational NGOs can productively interface with democratic systems in nation states and whether and to what degree can transnational and cosmopolitan forms of accountability and deliberation transform notions of what is public within national political systems. While this position of deliberation with respect to global governance can be charged with claims of being idealistic and improbable, the sober fact is that global forms of democracy or world government are even more open to this charge. Attempts to develop deliberation with respect to global governance bodies and global politics more generally are inherently more pragmatic than attempts to create a world government. Consequently, in order for more responsive forms of global governance to emerge that can effectively address global problems, motivated citizens from within the societies of G20 members and within transnational civil society will have to be the agents that demand higher levels and further avenues of accountability. Only then will the G20 be a forum that does more than promise the world in respect to global issues.