CAN CIVIL SOCIETY INFLUENCE G8
ACCOUNTABILITY?

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Abstract

This study outlines the mandate and activities of the Group of Eight (G8), examines for what and to whom the G8 is accountable, reviews the range and types of civil society groups interacting with the G8, and discusses how and to what extent this engagement has promoted or failed to promote G8 accountability through various actions: policy studies, evaluation and monitoring of commitments; petitions, lobbying, mobilisation and media campaigns; demonstrations and protests; dialogue; alternative summits; and participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships. The paper than analyses attitudes, procedures, structures and other factors that have helped or hindered civil society's contribution to G8 accountability.

The study concludes that the concept of accountability, although problematic, is applicable to the G8: leaders are individually accountable to their national electorates, to the global community, to regional and global governance agencies and to their fellow leaders. G8 transparency is still inadequate, but answerability for actions is stronger. Accountability for other global governance agencies is weaker, and accountability to the leaders' peers is nebulous. Accountability to those affected by G8 decisions varies by issue area but generally is not particularly strong. The greatest accountability gap is the lack of an enforcement mechanism. The most important conclusion is that civil society has enhanced G8 accountability but that this role has not yet reached its potential.

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Introduction

It is a challenging task to demonstrate the precise impact of civil society on global governance institutions of all types. This is especially true in the case of the Group of Eight (G8) – an informal transgovernmental forum – when compared to more formal international organisations. The G8, a powerful club of what is usually called the major industrial democracies – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – first met in a leaders' summit in 1975 in Rambouillet, France as G6 (without Canada that year), then as G7 until 1998 when Russia's full membership changed the group to G8. Several economic shocks and other major events in the early 1970s led to the emergence of the group. Among these developments were the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system based on fixed exchange rates, with the IMF and the World Bank unable to set up the necessary reforms; and the first oil crisis, when OPEC placed an embargo on oil supplies after the October 1973 Yom Kippur war, followed by disagreements among Western countries about how to respond to the embargo and to the resulting sharp price increases.[1] It was in this context that the idea of high-level Western economic meetings arose, leading eventually to the leaders' summits.

Since that beginning, when the G7 focused on economic and financial issues, the G7/G8 agenda has grown incrementally to embrace more and more topics: political concerns, and later a great number of diverse transnational, global issues from the environment to terrorism and infectious diseases.

The group's role and functions have also expanded. The main roles today, according to John Kirton, are deliberation, direction-giving, and decision-making as well as global governance

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[1] Putnam, Robert D. and Bayne, Nicholas (1987), *Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits*, rev. ed. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.): 25-27.

and domestic political management functions.[2]   The summit allows the attending heads of state and government to exercise political leadership, reconcile domestic and international concerns, develop collective management, and integrate economics and politics in their negotiations and decisions.

The support apparatus of each G8 leader is led by a personal representative (sherpa), as well as (since 2001) an Africa Personal Representative, two sous-sherpas (one economic, the other financial), a political director, and, of course, a large retinue of logistical, security and other staff. In earlier years of summitry, the foreign and finance ministers of each country were also part of the summit delegations; it was only with the organisational innovations of the 1998 Birmingham summit that these ministers were detached from summits and have held their separate pre-summit meetings to feed into the forthcoming summit (ministers had already held their own series of meetings, apart from the pre-summit meetings, for many years).

Because the G8 is not based on a founding charter –unlike the UN Charter or similar constitutive intergovernmental agreement – there are no built-in institutional mechanisms to set out or regulate the nature of interaction with other actors. Nor does the G8 have a secretariat (although G8 member countries do have their own administrative structures related to the G8); so there can be no structured, continuing machinery through which civil society and other non-state players can interact with the G8.

But those institutional and structural constraints have not prevented substantial and on balance positive interaction between the G8 and civil society. This paper aims to show, in a historical and pragmatic context, how that complex interaction has promoted or failed to promote G8 accountability.

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[2]   Kirton, John J. (2006), *A Summit of Significant Success: The G8 at St. Petersburg*, G8 Research Group, Toronto, 19 July, <www.g8.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2006stpetersburg/kirton_perf_060719.pdf >

The G8 and Accountability

A basic definition of accountability, applicable to democracies, is "that those who exercise power, whether as governments, elected representatives or as appointed officials, are in a sense stewards and must be able to show that they have exercised their powers and discharged their duties properly."[3] Edward Weisband and Alnoor Ibrahim cite four core components of accountability: transparency, answerability or justification, compliance, and enforcement or sanctions, adding that "accountability relies on the presence of all four."[4]

The notion of accountability is rather problematic in the case of the G8. Transparency, though greater now than in earlier years of summitry, is still inadequate. The case is stronger on the second criterion – answerability or justification – as will be shown in this discussion. Compliance with G8 commitments is difficult to assess but important advances in measuring compliance have been achieved by a continuing project of the University of Toronto's G8 Research Group and by other think tanks. Weisband's and Ibrahim's final criterion, enforcement or the possibility of sanctions, does not operate in case of the G8.

Goetz and Jenkins (2001)[5] distinguish two types of accountability: vertical (citizens holding the powerful to account) and horizontal (referring to inter-institutional checks and balances). Given the informal character of the G8, vertical accountability appears to be more applicable than horizontal, although a kind of inter-institutional accountability may be inferred. And the idea of mutual accountability – describing the interdependence of actors – is pertinent in

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[3]   *The Routledge Dictionary of Politics*, 3rd ed. (2004). Edited by David Robertson. (London: Routledge): 3.

[4]   Weisband, Edward and Ibrahim, Alnoor (2007) "Introduction: Forging Global Accountabilities", in Alnoor Ibrahim and Edward Weisband, *Forging Global Accountabilities: Participation, Pluralism and Public Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[5]   Cited by Weisband and Ibrahim, p. 6.

reflecting both types of transnational networks: civil society and the G8 itself.[6] The principal-agent relationship comes into play in considering accountability of the G8 vis-à-vis civil society; so does internal versus external accountability. Finally, "one kind of accountability tends not to preclude another."[7]

To Whom Is the G8 Accountable?

Accusations of lack of G8 accountability have been frequent in the press and on the part of some NGOs for many years. But if the G8 is accountable, then to whom?

First, as elected heads of state or government, the individual G8 leaders are or should be held accountable to their national populations, including accountability for their G8-related actions. A specific example of this accountability is the post-summit report made by UK prime ministers to Parliament. The G8 as a collective entity has no such direct constituency.

Second, as a group of world leaders, G8 heads of state or government are accountable not only to their domestic public but also to the global community. As well, the leaders want to have favourable press and public opinion at home and abroad. The G8, as can be documented in its public communiqués and declarations, has undertaken to provide global public goods and help create conditions in which those public goods can be achieved or enhanced. It is legitimate to hold the G8 accountable for this, but the lack of enforceability makes this type of accountability rather weak.

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[6]   Brown, L. D. (2007), in Alnoor Ibrahim and Edward Weisband, *Forging Global Accountabilities: Participation, Pluralism and Public Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[7]   Considine, M. (2002), "The End of the Line? Accountable Governance in the Age of Networks, Partnerships, and Joined-up Services," *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions* 15 (1): 21-40; cited in Barry L. Friedman, in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* (2006). Edited by Michael Moran, Martin Rein and Robert Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press); 486.

Third, G8 accountability to regional and global governance agencies is problematic as well. There are several factors to consider here. The G8 prefers smooth working relationships with such agencies; this is an incentive, for accountability, for itself as well as for the agencies in question. In addition, on issues on which the G8 is unable or unwilling to act decisively, it will remit the task to an IGO; for example, in referring unresolved trade problems to the WTO. This, too, is weak accountability. Another significant factor, related to this point, is the collective influence of the G8 – or the G7 that still survives in the finance ministers' forum – on certain IGOs. Such influence ranges from initiating reform or asking organisations to reform themselves (as is the case of the UN) through giving a quasi-binding request to an organisation to prepare studies or analyses (as with the OECD) to exercising substantial control over the Bretton Woods institutions.[8] The 2007 Heiligendamm summit added an important new role for the OECD by designating it as the platform of the G8's two-year dialogue with the five "outreach countries". This dialogue, the "Heiligendamm Process", is to cover cross-border investment, research and innovation, climate change, energy and development.[9]

Fourth, the G7's relationship with financial markets (this tends to be a G7 rather than a G8 matter) unfolds along similar lines. The G7 has had an important influence on (rather than accountability to) such markets through specific initiatives such as the reform of the global financial architecture, a concern of many summits.

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[8]   The G8 collectively holds 49.73% of voting power in the IMF and 47.48% of voting power in the World Bank (2006 figures). International Monetary Fund, *Annual Report of the Executive Board for the Financial Year Ended April 30, 2006* <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/ar/2006/eng/pdf/file11.pdf>, pp. 164-66; World Bank, *Annual Report 2006* <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/EXTANNREP/EXTANNREP2K6/0,,contentMDK:21046840~menuPK:2915768~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:2838572,00.html>.

[9] Heiligendamm Summit (2007), *Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy*, 7 June 2007, paras. 94-97. <www.g-8.de/nn_220074/Content/EN/Artikel/__g8-summit/anlagen/2007-06-07-gipfeldokument-wirtschaft-eng.html>; *Joint Declaration by the German G8 Presidency and and the Heads of State and/or Government of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa*, 8 June 2007 <www.g-8.de/nn_220074/Content/EN/Artikel/__g8-summit/anlagen/o5-erklaerung-en.html>.

Fifth, the G8 has, for some years, acknowledged its responsibility to extend to marginalised groups the benefits of globalisation and to remedy economic and other inequalities. G8 performance has been uneven; some benefits have accrued to disadvantaged populations, but many promises have remained unfulfilled or under-fulfilled. In fact, parts of civil society have claimed that it was precisely the G7/G8 that has caused poverty through lending practices of the club's members, causing or exacerbating indebtedness and poverty. The same holds true for the denial of market access to exports from developing countries, inadequate or inappropriately administered aid, and the exploitation of extractive industries.

Sixth, there is rather strong internal accountability within the broader G8 system. Over its 33-year history, the G7/G8 has spawned an expanding network of ministerial fora[10] and a variety of task forces, expert groups and working groups. The leaders charge many such sub-summit groups with specific tasks and instruct them to report back to the next or second-to-next summit; the groups are then fully accountable to the leaders for this. Some such groups, though originally set up by the leaders, have subsequently "devolved" to be able to function relatively independently from the summit leaders; and other groups initiated by the leaders have expanded their membership, mandate and resources beyond the G8's original design; for example, the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – launched by the G8's 2001 Genoa Summit and based on earlier UN initiatives – and the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering – established by the 1989 Paris G7 summit. In such cases, the relationship implies more than intra-G8 system accountability.

Finally, the G8 heads of state or government may be said to be accountable to their fellow leaders. When, at a summit, leaders undertake before their peers to accomplish a particular objective, they must face those peers should they not comply with their commitments. As asked by John Kirton: can a leader "look them in the eye" at the following year's summit if he or she

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[10]   The finance ministers' forum, as G5 without Canada and Italy, actually predated the first G6 summit of leaders (Rambouillet 1975) by two years.

does not fulfil promises made at the previous summit? But is this true accountability or does it merely carry a moral burden?

For What Is the G8 Accountable?

The larger themes of some summits illustrate the range of aspirations and issues for which the G8 can be held accountable for: "building world partnership and strengthening the international order" (London 1991); "working together for growth and a safer world" (Munich 1992); "strengthened commitment to jobs and growth" (Tokyo 1993); "making a success of globalization for the benefit of all" (Lyon 1996); "growth and responsibility" (Heiligendamm 2007). Beyond such broad themes, it is useful to indicate the trends and sweep of the expanding agenda of G7/G8 summits over their 33-year history.   After the economic and financial focus of the early years (1975-1981), political and security issues became increasingly prominent (1982-1988). From 1989 on, other global, transnational issues joined the agenda: democratisation; drugs; the problems of globalisation and of countries and populations marginalised by it, the challenges of development; developing country debt; climate change and other environmental issues; infectious diseases; migration; food safety; and diverse other terrorism and transnational organised crime; nuclear safety; energy; education; intellectual property; and topics including regional and other crises and conflicts. In all of these issue areas the G8 leaders set forth their views and priorities, often accompanied by specific undertakings.

Since 1996, the G8 Research Group has identified and tracked such commitments and produced compliance reports. For example, the final report on compliance with G8 commitments made at the 2005 Gleneagles summit identified 212 distinct commitments and selected 21 of those for evaluation of compliance with these priority commitments by each G8 country plus the European Union (the EU – formerly European Community – has been a participant though not a member state in the G7/G8 since 1977).[11] The Research Group classified these commitments in the following issue areas: peacekeeping; good governance; HIV/AIDS; polio eradication; official

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[11]   <www.g8.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2005compliance_final/2005-g8compliance-final.pdf>

development assistance; Africa (debt relief, economic growth, education); market access and export subsidies; least developed countries; the Middle East; Iraqi debt; Sudan; terrorism; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; transnational crime; renewable energy; climate change; tsunami relief; and security of surface transportation.

Monitoring and evaluating fulfillment of this alphabet soup of G8 undertakings is fair game in civil society's insistence on G8 accountability. Types and problems of such evaluations are discussed later in this paper.

Range and Types of Civil Society Groups Vis-à-vis the G8

Jan Aart Scholte defines civil society as "a political space where voluntary associations of people seek, from outside political parties, to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspect of social life. As such, civil society encompasses *inter alia* anti-poverty initiatives, business fora, clan and kinship unions, community associations, consumer advocates, environmental campaigns, ethnic lobbies, faith-based organisations, human rights promoters, labour unions, peace advocates, peasant groups, philanthropic foundations, professional bodies, relief organisations, research institutes, women's networks, and youth associations."[12] This applies to the present study as well, with the proviso that inclusion of business fora in the definition is problematic because the interests, *modus operandi* and clout of such fora may diverge and even stand in opposition to those of nonprofit NGOs and CSOs. Leaders and other officials of G8 countries, on their part, clearly distinguish between nonprofit civil society and business in their interaction with these two types of players. For example, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the respective hosts of the Gleneagles and Heiligendamm summits, chose the exclusive business gathering, the annual World Economic Forum – and not a civil society venue – to unveil or flesh out their agenda for their forthcoming presidencies of the

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[12]   Scholte, Jan Aart, Civil Society and Accountable Global Governance, Prospectus, November 2006. <www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/research/projects/20042006/csagg/cs-agg_prospectus.doc>

G8.[13] The business interest group International Chamber of Commerce has had a long-standing relationship with the G7 and the G8.[14]

What kinds of civil society groups have engaged the G7 and G8? The following discussion illustrates the range and diversity of actors.

The long history of this engagement begins with a rather humble letter of a local trade union group to US President Gerald Ford, host of the second summit held in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1976. In it, the president of the Puerto Rico Free Federation of Labor asks God to enlighten the leaders in their deliberations and expresses the wish that they should address a whole slew of economic and political issues. This, and other early civil society approaches did not have any demonstrable impact on the G7. In later years the trade union movement has built up a systematic and focused relationship with the G7 and G8.

Environmental NGOs and coalitions, too, have engaged the G7 and G8 for many years. Foremost among them have been Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund, but there have been many others. Human rights NGOs, too (for example, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International) have long interacted with the G7/G8. So have relief organisations (Oxfam, Tearfund, ActionAid and others); civil society groups with a development focus (for example, the World Development Movement); mass campaigns (particularly the Jubilee Debt Campaign, the Global Call to Action against Poverty and the related Make Poverty History movement); faith-based groups and leaders representing Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist,

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[13]   United Kingdom, Prime Minister's Office *Special Address by Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the World Economic Forum in Davos*, 27 January 2005. <www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1078995903270&a=KArticle&aid=1106749656900>; World Economic Forum, *Opening Address by Angela, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, at the World Economic Forum on 24 January 2007 in Davos* <www.weforum.org/pdf/AM_2007/merkel.pdf>.

[14]   Hajnal, Peter I. (2007). *The G8 System and the G20: Evolution, Role and Documentation* (Aldershot: Ashgate): 95-96.

Hindu and other traditions; civil society groups focusing on various social and political issues (for example, Social Watch, the Forum international de Montréal and Transparency International); youth groups (such as the J8 youth forum that began around the Gleneagles summit); and consumer advocates (Consumers International and others).   Emerging voices from the South have been particularly active in recent years, notably a number of African civil society groups or regularly meeting fora such as the "poor people's summits." The last-mentioned forum is an example of a group specifically focusing its activities on the G8; so were the Civil G8 that functioned during 2006, Russia's year of G8 presidency; and the G8 NGO Platform (with quite a different orientation than the Civil G8) in Germany's year, 2007.

It should be noted that major NGOs and coalitions, in their nexus with the G8, prefer to concentrate their activities in the summit host country and as close to the specific summit venue as possible. This has important implications: NGOs from other continents and other countries, particularly from the South, often lack sufficient financial and human resources to travel to those venues, with the result that civil society around those summits tends to be predominantly local, including local affiliates of large international NGOs. As well, civil society from the South is often represented around the summits by diaspora groups residing in the summit country.

The role of professional bodies, research groups and think tanks should also be mentioned. Examples are: national science academies, the G8 Research Group, Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs), and the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Canada.   There are small groupings of former G8 officials that continue to meet in their private capacity and concentrate fully or partly on G8-related issues: the Shadow G-8, and the InterAction Council.

Beyond the usual concept of civil society, broader civic action has been evident at or around several summits; the Make Poverty History march in Edinburgh just before the Gleneagles summit is a major instance. Along with large numbers of concerned citizens, rock

stars Bono and Bob Geldof and prominent personalities (for example, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Stephen Lewis) have played an important part vis-à-vis the G8 in recent years; one needs only recall the wildly successful Live 8 concerts held around the world in 2005.

Gender equity and women's issues have not been adequately represented either on the G8 agenda or in the interaction of women's groups with the G8, although there have been such groups; for example, the International Council of Women prior to the 2006 St. Petersburg summit. Moreover, many women leaders and activists have played an important part in other human rights, environmental, development-oriented and many other NGO groups and coalitions that have engaged the G8.

Finally, certain NGOs and civil society groups have been opposed to the G8 and refused to engage with it. An example is the G8 Alternatives Summit, a counter-summit that had met in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 3 July 2005, three days before the Gleneagles summit began (some previous counter-summits did engage with the official G7 and G8). A German alternative summit took place in Rostock, 5-7 June 2007, emphasising social justice, poverty, the environment, peace and security and, most of all, anti-globalisation.[15] Another example is the Anti-G8 Alliance for a Revolutionary Perspective[16] which staged protests, action days and blockades before and during the Heiligendamm summit.

Civil Society Actions Advancing G8 Accountability

One can draw some tentative conclusions from the 33-year history of summitry demonstrating or at least illustrating civil society influence on G7/G8 accountability, whether the impact was positive or negative. Some cases in point: impressive advocacy by the Jubilee movement at Birmingham; demonstrations marred by anarchist activity (and police brutality) at

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[15]   <www.g8-alternative-summit.org>

[16]   <www.antig8.tk/home_en.php>

the Genoa summit; and the increasingly systematic and purposeful (except for the hiatus of 2004 at Sea Island) civil society-G8 dialogue that was quite substantial at the 2000 Okinawa summit and has become a regular exercise beginning with the 2002 Kananaskis summit, increasing in intensity around the St. Petersburg summit – the first G8 summit hosted by Russia – and continuing with the Heiligendamm summit in Germany.

Reports and Policy Studies

The preparation and publication of evaluative reports and policy studies has been a significant element in civil society advocacy for greater G8 accountability. For example, in 2007, "Germanwatch" issued a policy paper and the DATA group (Debt AIDS Trade Africa) produced a critical evaluation of the fulfilment of the G8's promises to Africa made in 2005. DATA identified key G8 promises on the following issues: development assistance; debt; trade; health; education; water and sanitation; governance; peace and security; and Africa's new challenges. DATA finds that overall G8 progress on development assistance was off track, although two G8 countries (Japan and the UK) were on track in fulfilling their Gleneagles promises. On debt, the G8 was on track, but further action was needed if the benefits of G8 commitments were to be preserved. Progress on trade remained off track. On health, it was also off track despite impressive progress on HIV/AIDS treatment, and some G8 countries were providing less than their equitable share. On education, the G8 as a whole was off track with insufficient assistance provided, although some G8 countries did better than others. On water and sanitation, funding had actually fallen. On governance, G8 performance was mixed and there was need for better data. And on peace and security the record was mixed as well. Proceeding from these results, DATA presented recommendations to the German hosts of the Heiligendamm summit.[17] This is an excellent example of both tracking and advocating for G8 accountability.

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[17] Germanwatch (2007), *Testing the Credibility of the Powerful: Concrete Action for Environment and Development*, <www.germanwatch.org/pubdiv/g8ngo07e.pdf>. A number of major German and international NGOs have signed on to the latter, among them Greenpeace, Oxfam and Care. *The DATA Report 2007* is accessible at <www.thedatareport.org/pdf/DATAREPORT2007.pdf>

Evaluations are a thorny problem. Although DATA and the G8 Research Group start from different premises, take a different time span of implementation and us different methods, it is interesting that the Research Group's compliance report on Gleneagles commitments is considerably more generous than DATA's assessment.[18]

Another important method of evaluation of G8 performance is the scoring system devised by Putnam and Bayne and further developed by Bayne. This method assigns letter grades to co-operative achievements of G7/G8 leaders at summits. For example, the Rambouillet summit rates an "A-" for advances on monetary reform; the 1978 Bonn summit earns the highest Bayne grade ("A") for growth, energy and trade; the 1984 London summit is given a "C-" on debt; the 1987 Venice summit gets a "D" for "nothing significant"; and the 1995 Halifax summit receives a "B+" for initiatives on institutional review and IMF and UN reform.[19]

The need for monitoring its commitments has been acknowledged by the G8 itself as well as by civil society. The final event of the Civil G8 group in Russia's summit year was a conference of Russian and international NGOs on 2 December, called "Delivering the 2006 G8 Agenda".[20]

Petitions, Lobbying, Mobilisation, Media Campaigns

Petitions have played a role, too. An important example was "Jubilee 2000 petition", in which the Jubilee movement urged the Birmingham summit (the first true G8 summit) to give complete debt forgiveness to all poor countries by the year 2000. Host G8 leader Tony Blair praised this

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[18]   The DATA report draws heavily on figures from OECD's DAC report.

[19]   Putnam, Robert D. and Bayne, Nicholas (1987), *Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits*, rev. ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.; Bayne, Nicholas (2005), *Overcoming Evil with Good: Impressions of the Gleneagles Summit, 6-8 July 2005*, Gleneagles and London: G8 Research Group, 18 July, <www.g8.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2005gleneagles/bayne2005-0718.html>; Bayne, Nicholas (2005), *Staying Together: The G8 Summit Confronts the 21st Century*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK.

[20]   For details of the Civil G8's activities see <http://en.civilg8.ru>.

initiative and the summit issued a response in a collective document.[21] Alas, complete debt

forgiveness did not occur by 2000 and, despite significant progress, has not been achieved to this

day. In 2007, part of civil society's preparations for the Heiligendamm summit included a letter-

writing campaign to achieve just trade policies.[22]

Civil society lobbying has for the most part taken the form of dialogue, one of the modes of

action detailed below.   FIM (in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006), Chatham House (in 2005) and the

Civil G8 group (in 2005) have been especially strong promoters of dialogue and consultation.[23]

Civil society groups tend to hold strategy or other planning sessions before and during G8

summits to mobilise citizen pressure effectively, and decide on action to be taken. For example,

activists against the G8 held a series of meetings in Rostock in late 2006 and in 2007 in the lead-

up to the G8 summit.[24]

Media campaigns have long been a staple of civil society action vis-à-vis the G8. A case in

point: Greenpeace is prolific in producing press releases that address environmental and climate

concerns, and critical evaluations of the G8's performance in this area. Internet mobilisation

campaigns have taken place – as they had in earlier years – in Germany in 2007, reported on the

website of the G8 NGO Platform, a coalition of some 40 organisations (www.g8-

germany.info/english/index.htm), an umbrella group for many diverse civil society activities:

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[21]   < www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1998birmingham/2000.htm>.

[22]   <http://wto.gerechtigkeit-
jetzt.de/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=120>.

[23]   Martin, Nigel (2005), "Not Representative, but Still Legitimate," *Alliance*, 10:2: 16-17;
http://en.civilg8.ru.

[24]   <www.heiligendamm2007.de/index_en.html>

demonstrations, a series of conferences and an alternative summit, among others. Opinion pieces expressing civil society positions often appear in the media.[25]

Demonstrations and Protests

Street demonstrations and protests have long been part of the civil society scene around G7 and G8 summits. It seems useful to draw a distinction between non-protest demonstrations such as the huge (250,000 participants), peaceful Make Poverty History march in Edinburgh immediately before the start of the Gleneagles summit, and protest marches such as the international rally on 2 June 2007 in the centre of Rostock.[26] An interesting demonstration (in the sense of advocacy by presentation rather than a march) took place at the time of the Genoa summit when Médecins Sans Frontières had a van containing an exhibition of the ravages of neglected diseases and lack of essential medicines affecting poor developing countries, and showing practical solutions. Finally, and of equal concern to the vast peaceful majority of civil society and to authorities alike, is "uncivil society"; for example the violent anarchist groups that disrupted the city of Genoa at the time of the G8 summit held there.

Related to this are proposed or attempted blockades, as at Stirling and Auchterarder in Scotland where during the Gleneagles summit groups of anarchists caused serious delays by blocking the roads leading to Gleneagles and disrupting train service. A group calling itself "Block G8" has proposed civil disobedience by blockading the Heiligendamm summit. Then there is a seamy side to this: certain anarchist groups (but not all) have tried to disrupt or sabotage peaceful civil society action; extremist factions such as neo-nazis have also been seen occasionally at these events.

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[25]   See, for example, George, Susan (2001), "L'Ordre libéral et ses basses oeuvres," *Le Monde diplomatique* 48:569: 6; Monbiot, George (2005), "Africa's New Best Friends," *The Guardian*, 5 July 2005: 21.

[26]   <www.g8-germany.info/english/rally.htm>

Principal Modes of Civil Society Action vis-à-vis the G8

There is some overlap among various categories of civil society actions. The author of this study has, in previous work, identified four principal modes of civil society interaction with the G8 (advocacy and compliance monitoring have been an important role for civil society engaging in at least three of these modes):[27]

First, *dialogue* with leaders and other officials of G8 countries is an important means of exchanging mutually useful ideas, sharing common positions, and giving both G8 governments and responsible civil society groups greater legitimacy in the political process (a price that many civil society groups pay with some reluctance). Dialogue or consultation implies willingness to co-operate, though not necessarily to agree, with G8 governments. In recent years, summit host governments and other G8 governments have for the most part welcomed and accommodated such dialogue. Before the Okinawa summit, for example, there was dialogue between the Japanese host government and civil society leaders in Europe, and on the first day of the summit itself the host Prime Minister met with representatives of nine NGOs. At Kananaskis, there were active consultations and dialogue between the Canadian government and civil society groups, notably FIM. Prior to and following the Gleneagles summit, Chatham House organised a series of consultation meetings with the government and other stakeholders including civil society. Before and at the St. Petersburg summit there was extensive dialogue between the host government and representatives of numerous domestic and international civil society groups. At Heiligendamm the German presidency of the G8 stated that it considered the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development (Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung) to be the government's main partner in civil society consultations, but with other German and international NGOs participating as well. The host government conducted a dialogue in Bonn on 25-26 April 2007 (chaired by Development Minister and all nine G8 sherpas participating) with

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[27]   Hajnal, Peter I. (2007). *The G8 System and the G20: Evolution, Role and Documentation* (Aldershot: Ashgate): 130-31.

representatives of German and international civil society. Chancellor Angela Merkel held her own

consultation on 14 May with the leaders of 20 major NGOs.

Second, peaceful *demonstrations* are a democratic right and the governments of countries

calling themselves democratic should not only permit but also facilitate such demonstrations,

regardless of whether or not those governments agree with particular groups or their objectives.

Demonstrations before and during G8 summits have involved the whole gamut of civil society,

ranging from advocacy groups that prefer co-operative interaction to groups of protesters who do

not wish to co-operate with the G8 and to the violence-prone minority that tend to take advantage

of the opportunity presented by such events and can hurt the cause of the peaceful majority of

civil society groups. Positive examples include the Jubilee movement's massive peaceful

demonstrations during the Birmingham summit and the even larger Make Poverty History march

in Edinburgh just before the Gleneagles summit. But there are negative experiences, too: at the

Genoa summit, there were large street protests and a considerable presence of disruptive

anarchists. The confrontation with inexperienced and combative police resulted in several

injuries and the tragic death of a protester. Civil society faced a different sort of barrier at the time

of the Sea Island summit; demonstrations were actively discouraged and made very difficult by

authorities in the summit host country, the US.   The same was true in St. Petersburg. German

NGOs staged a mass demonstration in Rostock on 2 June 2007, just six days before the opening

of the Heiligendamm summit with the *altremondiste* theme "Another World Is Possible".[28]

Third, *parallel summits*, too, are a legitimate democratic activity of citizen and NGO groups.

These counter-summits attract both co-operative and non-co-operative (with the G8) groups, and

the predominance of one or the other affects the agenda and tenor of each counter-summit.

Constructive proposals of these parallel summits can be and have been transmitted to the G8

heads for consideration. The first alternative summit, called "Popular Summit", took place around

the time of the 1981 Ottawa G7 summit. A group known as TOES (The Other Economic Summit)

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[28]   <g8-germany.info/english/rally.htm>

organised a number of counter-summits in the past, the first time in London at the time of the 1984 summit. The 1991 London EnviroSummit was an alternative summit devoted to one particular issue area. The tradition of parallel summits has continued; in 2007 over 40 German and international civil NGOs held an alternative summit in Rostock on 5-7 June 2007, coinciding with the official summit.[29]

Fourth, civil society *partnership* in G7/G8-initiated multi-stakeholder groups or task forces. Such groups, all too rare in G8 history, are examples of mutually useful activity. As with dialogue, partnership implies willingness to co-operate, though not necessarily agree, with G8 governments and private-sector stakeholders. Examples: DOT Force (Digital Opportunities Task Force), which was active between 2000 and 2002; and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Indicators of Civil Society's Impact on the G8

Collective and other documents of G8 summits are important indicators of the G8 recognising the importance of civil society, undertaking to work with NGOs or urging other institutions to do so; thus, they signal acknowledgement of accountability. The Halifax G7 summit was the first one to refer to NGOs and civil society, in the context of promoting sustainable development and reforming international financial institutions.   The Halifax communiqué promises that "to increase overall coherence, cooperation and cost effectiveness, we will work with others to encourage … improved coordination among international organizations, bilateral donors and NGOs." Subsequent summits have similarly acknowledged the role of civil society. For example, the 1997 Denver communiqué "reaffirm[ed] the vital contribution of civil society" to the environment, democratic governance and poverty eradication. To take the example of Jubilee, cited above, in 1998 British Prime Minister Tony Blair paid tribute to the "dignified manner

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[29]   <g8-alternative-summit.org>

in which it demonstrated in Birmingham, and for making a most persuasive case for debt relief."[30]

The Genoa G8 communiqué undertook to "promote innovative solutions [for sustainable development] based on a broad partnership with civil society and the private sector."

The Kananaskis *Chair's Summary* (expressing the host leader's "take" on the summit rather than full consensus of all leaders) does not mention civil society, but other summit documents do; the Africa Action Plan – the G8's response to NEPAD – includes several explicit references to civil society, and so do some G8 ministerial documents. For example, the *Chair's Summary* of the development ministers' post-Kananaskis meeting calls for greater civil society engagement in development strategies and the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The Gleneagles final document on Africa (which, along with climate change, was the centrepiece of Blair's summit that year), again makes no mention of NGOs or civil society, but the Gleneagles plan of action on climate change and other collective documents do call for civil society engagement or participation. Significantly, Blair, in his end-of-summit press conference as host leader, paid tribute to the positive contributions of civil society, mass demonstrations and celebrities. He singled out Make Poverty History for praise: "I can't think of a campaign that has been so brilliantly organised or struck such a chord with such a large number of people worldwide.[31] But this is the summit host speaking in his individual capacity, indicating that perhaps there was not enough consensus among the G8 to acknowledge civil society in the main Africa document.

One of the principal collective documents of the St. Petersburg, the G8 statement called *Global Energy Security* and the accompanying *St. Petersburg Plan of Action on Global Energy*

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[30]   Cited in M. Dent and B. Peters (1999) *The Crisis of Poverty and Debt in the Third World.* Aldershot: Ashgate: 188.

[31]   United Kingdom, Prime Minister (2005), 'British Prime Minister Tony Blair Reflects On 'Significant Progress' Of G8 Summit', Press Conference at the Conclusion of the Gleneagles Summit, 8 July, <www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=10789959 03270&a=KArticle&aid=1119520262754>

Security, again make no reference to civil society or NGOs, but another central document, the statement *Education for Innovative Societies in the 21st Century*; the *G8 Summit Declaration on Counter-Terrorism* does. Repeating the Gleneagles pattern, host leader Vladimir Putin stated in his final press conference: "our discussions took into account recommendations made by two very important forums that took place in Moscow at the beginning of July - the World Summit of Religious Leaders and the International Forum of Non-Governmental Organisations, the Civil G8 2006. … The summit's discussions resulted in the substantial outcome of a whole range of agreements that are reflected in the corresponding documents." If this was indeed the case, it would indicate substantial civil society impact on the summit's outcome and, by extension, on the sense of accountability of the G8 to public opinion and priorities as expressed by civil society.[32]

Constituencies Served by Civil Society Initiatives

When demanding greater accountability from the G8, civil society stands on firmer ground when it has put its own "accountability house" in order (and there have been accountability deficits within civil society itself, as many NGOs have acknowledged). The foremost beneficiaries of civil society accountability should be the populations served, be they recipients of humanitarian aid, victims of HIV/AIDS, poor countries suffering the effects of unjust trade policies, populations in need of meaningful debt relief, or suffering the consequences of war or natural disasters, to cite a few examples. Civil society has helped in these areas through advocacy, service delivery, publicity, mobilisation, and other types of action.

An important constituency for NGOs is their own membership, to which they must be accountable. Here, adherence to their mandates and effective implementation of their programmes are paramount. Have they used their resources to best advantage in observing the priorities as set by their members? Have the boards or task forces of NGOs remained focused on their most important tasks?

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[32] St. Petersburg Summit (2006), *Press Statement Following the G8 Summit*, St. Petersburg, 18 July, <http://en.g8russia.ru/podcast/001/246/115/putin4_en.mp3>

Civil society accountability to governments must also be considered. National regulatory agencies tend to set parameters; for example, the percentage of an NGO's expenditures that may, for tax exemption purposes, be spent on advocacy rather than service delivery.

Further, civil society has aided the governments of G8 member states – more in some countries than in others – to allow these governments to increase their awareness of citizen concerns on issues on the G8 agenda and on other matters; and to stimulate government action to benefit society. But there is a related, sensitive question: Who is using whom? By engaging G8 governments, civil society lends those governments and indirectly to the G8 itself greater legitimacy than desired.[33] On the other hand, civil society groups can in the course of dialogue gain greater appreciation of the limits of what government actions are politically and diplomatically possible in a G8 setting. Moreover, it may well be useful for civil society groups to have various open channels to G8 governments. So, one can venture to say that both parties are using each other while also benefiting their respective constituencies.

Attitudes and Procedures versus Structures to Affect the Accountability Impact of Civil Society Activities

Due to the informal nature of the G8, there cannot be constitutional provisions for relations with civil society because the G8 is not based on a constitution or other international agreement. Therefore, such relations entail attitudes, willingness, and, optimally, further development of a culture of receptiveness or at least the acceptance of already established processes of interaction with civil society. But systematic (though not formalised) processes for consultation with civil society have taken root in the bureaucracies of at least some G8 governments. Such processes entail liaison with government officials ranging from lower levels to sherpas (who are often deputy

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[33]   Nigel Martin comments on the paradox of civil society engaging the G8 without enhancing the G8's legitimacy. Martin, "Not Representative, but Still Legitimate", *Alliance*, 10:2 (June 2005): 16-17.

ministers) to cabinet members and, in rare cases, with G8 heads of state or government. Especially significant are civil society liaisons with governments hosting a particular G8 summit.

In the broader G8 system, there has been considerable interaction between certain ministerial fora (for instance, development ministers' and environment ministers' meetings) and civil society. And in the case of certain task forces and other summit-created sub-groups, NGOs have actually been among built-in multistakeholder partners, adding weight to civil society influence on accountability of such groups.

There have been positive and encouraging examples of a government's openness to civil society and willingness to listen to, learn from, and give respect to civil society; this was the case, for example, for the Japanese hosts of the Okinawa summit, the Canadians at Kananaskis in 2002, the French at Evian in 2003, the British at Gleneagles in 2005 and the Russians in 2006 in St. Petersburg. On the other hand, the US host of the Sea Island summit showed practically no interest or inclination to engage with civil society, and took measures to discourage even peaceful demonstrations. Of course, the post-9/11 concern with security has been a strong factor (this resulted, for example, in the leaders meeting in secluded and well-secured venues for their summits); but it has not stopped willing and receptive governments from cultivating relations with civil society.

It is difficult to determine what incentives G8 governments offer to encourage engagement with civil society representatives. One can surmise that governmental decisions in this regard are subject not only to favourable or unfavourable attitudes but also to cost-benefit considerations. It is no less difficult for an outsider to know what kind of training, if any, government officials receive in building and maintaining relations with civil society groups. This author's informal conversations with G8-oriented officials of several governments give rise to an impression of the effects of shifting government priorities, staff rotation and allocations, and the ebb and flow of a

particular government's attention to G8 matters.[34] In the best case, expertise is passed on in an organised fashion to successive officials involved in summitry.

Willingness of G8 governments to engage civil society varies by country, as indicated earlier. Generally, governments seem to feel more comfortable (with occasional exceptions) dealing with large, well-established NGOs, which point up yet another accountability gap: marginalised social groups are less likely to get a hearing, particularly smaller NGOs from the South.

G8 governments use the term "outreach" for their willing contacts with civil society. Even many civil society groups have adopted the word. But "outreach" does not reflect the phenomenon with complete accuracy; it implies a one-way approach by a government. In reality, initiatives for contact often come first from NGOs rather than from governments.

As for transparency, G8 governments operate on a public as well as a private level. Insofar as a government is transparent in its actions and public statements and press conferences, that government opens doors to civil society and media scrutiny. But in the G8, actual face-to-face negotiations take place behind the scenes, privately and confidentially, and are revealed only indirectly, in several ways: when officials give off-the-record press briefings during summits (these must be taken on faith, but it is possible to compare briefings about the same meeting given by different delegations. Memoirs of prominent participants, sometimes published long after the event, can be revealing but tend to be selective and at times self-serving. Actual details of the G8's in-camera negotiations will only come to light when official archives are eventually opened to researchers, usually in 30 years' time, and subject to declassification policies. Thus, transparency, one of Weisband's and Ibrahim's four measures of accountability, operates only partially in the G8's case.

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[34]   Member governments tend to pay particularly strong attention to G8 matters during the year leading up to the summit they host, culminating during their actual year of G8 presidency, and continuing at a high level in the year following "their" summit. But some G8 governments maintain more intense continuing involvement than others.

Finally, a cautionary note on G8-civil society relations is in order. Such a note was provided by Stephen Lewis, former Canadian diplomat, well-known humanitarian and the UN Secretary-General's former special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Writing about prominent celebrities as well as many NGOs shortly after the Gleneagles summit, he asserted that Geldof's "incestuous proximity" to the UK government, his membership in Blair's Commision for Africa and his success with the Live 8 concerts made him "an inescapable member of the Blair team … [and] a cheerleader for the G8." In his passionate advocacy for Africa, Lewis was critical of broader civil society reaction to the outcome of Gleneagles, asserting that civil society was effectively co-opted by Tony Blair: "Its normally tough, analytic appraisals were replaced by adoring complicity; the principled NGO community suddenly found itself basking in the … aura of power…. Most of the major NGO players knew that they'd been had, but … [in their post-summit press releases t]hey could barely summon a twitch of indignation, let alone a spasm of outrage. They congratulated the G8 on progress made, overstated that progress, and then uttered only the most plaintive pleas for more."[35] Perhaps this overstates the case, but it points up a risk of close civil society involvement with not just the G8 but other institutions of global governance as well.

Factors Helping and Hindering Accountable G8 Governance through Civil Society Involvement

Long observation and analysis of the G8-civil society nexus helps identify factors that contribute to civil society enhancing G8 accountability, as well as circumstances that militate against such positive influence. Here are some salient points worth considering on both the civil society and the G8 side of the equation. This also bears on the matter of improving the accountability dynamic.

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[35]   Lewis, Stephen (2005) *Race against Time* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press): 26, 146-47.

First, NGOs and civil society coalitions stand a much better chance to have an impact on the G8 when networking with like-minded groups. The whole tends to be more than a sum of its parts.

Second, civil society has been most effective when it recognised and exploited linkages of G7 and G8 issues, for example between education and health, or trade and debt relief. It is important for civil society to resist the temptation to concentrate on single issues of their narrower concern and expertise.

Third, CSOs can be more successful in their relationship with the G8 if they recognise that the G8 summit is part of a continuum of various major international meetings taking place in a given year. This has implications for continuing attention and action around these other international fora: the UN, the WTO, the IEA, the WHO or other organisations.

Fourth, thorough knowledge of the G8 system and process is crucial in order to maximise potential civil society impact. This includes dialogue with the whole G8 system, including ministerial, task force and sherpa meetings, awareness of the timing and agenda of such meetings, and familiarity with G8 member governments' summit-supporting institutions.

Fifth, starting the dialogue and lobbying early in the summit process is essential, since G8 agenda-building is at least a year-long process, being formulated or honed gradually from one summit to the next (although host governments have had to heed other G8 governments' priorities as well as persistent, multi-year G8 issues). If CSOs hope to have any influence on the evolving summit agenda, they can do so more realistically if they get involved in the process early.

Sixth, flexibility contributes to effectiveness. More successful CSOs have shown their readiness to be reactive or proactive, according to need. This implies, for example, taking advantage of issues of which the G8 is seized or that are also important to civil society, as well

as lobbying to try to get other civil society concerns on the G8 agenda (although the latter is less likely to have much effect on the G8).

Seventh, it has been a continuing challenge for civil society to isolate potentially violent or disruptive elements (this is more so at certain summit venues than elsewhere). Seattle, Quebec City, Genoa, Gleneagles and Rostock showed that violence and anarchy can harm the vast majority of civil society activists who use peaceful and democratic methods. After 9/11, it has become even more crucial for civil society to distance itself from, and isolate, the 'uncivil society' of violent anarchists and others of similar bent. CSOs have shown that they can succeed in this, but they must remain vigilant and step up self-patrolling and other efforts at events such as G8 summits.

Eighth, certain NGOs and other CSOs may choose on the grounds of principle or ideology not to participate in dialogue or other constructive interaction with the G8. In view of their limited human and material resources, CSOs also need to reflect on whether it is worth expending time and energy on dialogue and other interaction with G8 governments before, at and after summits and ministerial meetings. However, it is important to weigh carefully the costs and benefits of self-inclusion and self-exclusion and to recognise that the price of self-exclusion is lack of influence on the G8.

Ninth (and this hardly needs restating in this information age), information and communication technology has played a crucial role in transforming and empowering civil society. It has increased the scope and the speed of CSO activity exponentially. For many NGOs, ICT is the tool of choice. They have been able to use the internet and other communication technologies strategically in fundraising, research, advocacy, service delivery, and networking and coalition-building – all this can be put in service for a better shot at influencing G8 accountability. On the other hand, ICT can be used against civil society, or misused by mischievous or irresponsible elements within civil society itself.

Tenth, when a host country is unwilling to interact with civil society, NGOs and other CSOs can resort to other options to influence the G8: advocacy including the drafting and dissemination of policy papers, dialogue with receptive non-host G8 governments, and staging parallel events - in another country if necessary. Of course, national NGOs based in G8 countries are in a strong position to lobby their own government.

Eleventh, just as the G8 has no permanent consultation machinery with civil society, global civil society likewise lacks continuing machinery for this purpose. Would such civil society continuity be desirable or realistic?

Finally, while G8 government initiatives toward civil society actors are important, civil society does not have to take its cues from government. CSOs have been more successful when they developed strategies on their own terms, rather than depending on official G8 "outreach".

Conclusions

This study has examined how civil society has influenced or failed to influence G8 accountability. It shows that the concept of accountability, within limits, is applicable to the G8, and that civil society has contributed to G8 accountability to some degree.

The notion of accountability is especially problematic in the case of the G8. It is easier to discern the accountability of one or more G8 countries than collective accountability of the G8 as a whole. Evaluations of G8 performance (as compared to promises) bear this out; they tend to focus on compliance, or lack thereof, of individual countries, and then aggregate these results for the G8.

Transparency – an important component of accountability – in the G8 is stronger now than in earlier years, but still only partial, limited to public documents and conferences, and, by-and-

large, leaving actual G8 negotiations in the private, confidential sphere. Accountability is somewhat stronger on the criterion of answerability for G8 decisions or actions. The G8 has increasingly wished to be a good global citizen. Compliance, or lack thereof, with G8 commitments provides a more fertile ground for assessing accountability. Various philosophies and methods of evaluating G8 performance as compared to undertakings have been applied to good effect by civil society groups. For institutional and structural reasons, there is no realistic possibility of enforcement or sanctions vis-à-vis the G8. This is definitely an accountability gap.

As for the target of accountability, the G8's presumably democratically elected leaders are answerable for their actions to their populations, but the G8 as a collective entity has no such direct constituency. Yet, as the G8 has set out to formulate and help the achievement of global public goods, it has or should have global accountability, including to marginalised populations. This kind of accountability, too, seems not particularly strong.

The G8's accountability to other institutions of global governance is again problematic. The G8 is part of a network of such institutions and interacts with them with various degrees of authority, depending on the nature of each relationship. But here, accountability seems to flow the other way: from the other governance institutions to the G8.

G8 leaders' accountability to one another is itself nebulous and plays out more openly on the moral plane than in the in-camera negotiations which elude direct public knowledge and scrutiny. On the other hand, internal accountability within the broader G8 system is much firmer, extending to the leaders – or ministers – establishing sub-bodies, setting their tasks and work programmes, and requiring them to report back;

The G8's external accountability may be said to be episodic and inconsistent. It is not particularly strong as expressed in public documents of the G8 and is even weaker in the implementation of summit undertakings, although it is stronger in certain issue areas than in

others. The G8 as a collective entity has insufficient direct accountability but stronger, yet still inadequate, levels of implicit accountability to those affected by the club's decisions and initiatives.

Civil society actions to enhance G8 accountability have become more sophisticated and more powerful as the G8's history has progressed. Civil society strategies and tactics have ranged from dialogue and other consultation through demonstrations, alternative summits (whether co-operatively with the official G8 or not) to occasional multistakeholder partnerships. The foregoing discussion presented a number of variables affecting civil society's positive and negative impact on G8 accountability, and listed salient points characterising that interaction. It is, however, difficult to escape the conclusion that civil society influence on G8 accountability, while growing, has not yet reached its potential. Of course, civil society's potential impact is strongly influenced by the willingness or reluctance of G8 governments to engage, as well as by a lack of continuing machinery for interaction, due to the informal nature of the G8 as a transnational network – it is a case of habits and culture than structure.

This paper has attempted to identify and analyse a variety of factors affecting civil society's influence on G8 accountability. All of these factors raise additional points and questions, and call for further research.