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Managing Global Governance



Call for papers

2nd bi-annual conference on G20 research

Accountability and inclusiveness in G20 club governance: the role of transnational actors

21 – 22 May 2020, Cape Town

Co-organised by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) and the South African Institute of International Affairs
(SAIIA)

Background

The G20 has always struggled with the question of legitimacy, as it is operating outside of the traditional pillars of formal institutional architectures. In contrast to formal international institutions the G20 lacks a clear mandate, operational principles and coherent reporting structures. The group is under much criticism for the grinding down of group cohesion, exacerbated by the lack of binding rules, within the ten years after the 2008 crisis. Furthermore, civil-society groups and academia point to the lack of accountability of the G20 countries vis-à-vis their citizens as well as countries and societies outside the elite club. At the same time, and as a reaction to this criticism, the G20 is increasingly engaging with transnational actors understood as non-nation state actors, thus including civil society, business, and academia engaging in cooperation across borders.

It is well acknowledged that the changing politics of foreign policy require the consultation with transnational actors, as solutions to global challenges will require the involvement of actors beyond the diplomatic core of international relations. The G20 is a club of state governments. Yet, the number of G20 stakeholders has been growing. The G20 universe comprises not only governmental actors and international organisations, but increasingly also several so-called 'Engagement Groups' or 'Dialogue Partners' that represent different transnational stakeholders such as business, think tanks, civil society organisations, labour unions, women and youth representatives, science organisations, foundations as well as cities. This effort of the G20 to be more inclusive may be a result of a need to increase input legitimacy through creating another tier of engagement, possibly due to an increasing societal assertiveness that demands a say in the decision-making process of the G20. A string of so-called outreach groups alongside the G20 create linkages to relevant transnational actors, thereby going beyond the 'state world' in discussions. The aims of the so called B20 (business), T20 (think tanks), C20 (civil society), L20 (labour), W20 (women), Y20 (the youth), S20 (science) and U20 (urban/cities) range from criticising the G20's decisions, lobbying the policy process and to providing analytical input. How do these groups organise themselves? Which strategies of engagement do they pursue (also towards actors beyond the G20 countries)? How do they engage with the G20 and how do their topics sit on the G20 agenda? Can we identify "success" in engagement?

The conference aims at exploring the relationship between the G20 and transnational actors. Within the focus of the conference are the driving forces of increased transnational engagement, the nature of the relationship, the internal organisation structure of the various transnational actors as well as their interrelations and last but not the least the impact these and other outreach groups have on G20 deliberations and subsequent implementation of decisions. Against this background, we invite the submission of abstracts for papers that could, for example, address topics and questions such as:

- What explains the formation and mode of engagement (both internal and vis-à-vis the G20) of the different engagement groups?
- How can we assess (if not “measure”) the G20’s responsiveness to the different types of input it gets through the outreach groups?
- How accessible are the groups to actors from beyond the G20? In other words, what is their potential to increase the inclusiveness of the G20?
- What are elements that make these groups and some of their specific inputs impactful?
- Which actors within the G20 (e.g. Sherpa vs. Finance Track, emerging vs. developed countries) are most receptive to what type of input – and at what point in time?
- Can we identify specific elements that make for success in the G20’s role as a potential catalyst for overcoming deadlocks in international organisations?
- What is the potential of transnational actors to serve as stabilisers if not promoters of multilateral cooperation?

The conference aims to bring together researchers representing different regions of the world, disciplines and methodological approaches. Papers can address specific formats amongst the outreach groups and setups. The answers to these questions of what it needs to capture the G20’s attention and action are particularly relevant to African actors with limited representation in the G20 group itself. We therefore hope specifically for contributions from African scholars on civil society engagement with this particular forum in global governance. The aim is to publish the results of the conference as an edited volume.

Application and Deadline for Submissions

Please submit your abstract (max. 400 words) to christa.ottersbach@die-gdi.de no later than 29 February 2020. We expect full draft papers (max. 8.000 words) on 10 May 2020.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Axel Berger (axel.berger@die-gdi.de) or Sven Grimm, Co-Chair of Programme on Inter- and Transnational Cooperation, DIE (sven.grimm@die-gdi.de).

Bonn and Johannesburg, 8 January 2020

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