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Strengthening Global Governance by Strengthening the G20

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Introduction

Alan S. Alexandroff

What is 'Global Order'?

There is some history to this e-Journal, *Global Summitry*. And it is worth recounting in this inaugural e-Journal Special Issue. The journal was actually born digitally in 2013 as the *Global Summitry Journal* (GSJ). This first appearance was posted to the Bepress Global Summitry Digital Commons platform. Bepress the then publisher had begun life in 1999 as the Berkeley Electronic Press launched to make, as their website suggested, a platform where products and services to support scholarly communication could be placed. This electronic platform created was one vehicle to do just that. And it was there that the GSJ first appeared.

From there, and after some discussion with principals ending in 2015 – the Journal renamed as: *Global Summitry: Politics, Economics and Law in International Governance* – reappeared at Oxford University Press (OUP) (https://academic.oup.com/globalsummitry). Both digitally, and in print the Journal published four volumes at OUP continuing from 2015 through 2018 on behalf of the then Munk School of Global Affairs and at the Rotman School of Management, both at the University of Toronto. The partnership was much appreciated but the Journal in that form came to end after Volume 4. All the articles published at OUP can be found today at the Global Summitry Project (GSP) https://globalsummitryproject.com

So now on our GSP digital platform the newest iteration, the e-Journal, *Global Summitry*, can be found. Notwithstanding the various platform variations just described, the mission of the Journal remains the same: to publish the best articles on global governance and global summitry. As identified at the website the hope is to "Bring global governance to the world". This focus has become more pointed with the return of geopolitics: the growing US-China rivalry and, most immediately, the unprovoked aggression by Russia on Ukraine and the threat this raises to current global order. But that is where we are.

Defining the Key Global Order Concepts

In the original issue of *Global Summitry: Politics, Economics and Law in International Governance*, the then editors, Donald Brean and myself (Alexandroff and Brean 2015) tried to define and trace the key critical concepts in global order: global summitry and global governance and then trace the evolution of 'global summitry'. While we acknowledged growing disorder in the global order, the degree of disorder today is well beyond what we saw in 2015. At the time we were relatively content to remain focused on what we assessed as the critical concepts of global order.

Let's start with global governance. It is fair to say that global governance has numerous definitions. Probably the most attractive, at least in my mind, is also possibly the simplest. That simple definition was identified by Ian Goldin (2013, loc. 175 of 3186): "By global governance, I mean the institutions and processes which seek to manage global problems." A rather more elaborate definition was also highlighted in our introductory article

in the inaugural issue – this definition provided by Weiss, Thakur, and Ruggie (2010, 6):

> Global Governance – …refers to existing collective arrangements to solve problems. Adapting our definition of governance, "global governance" is the sum of laws, norms, policies, and institutions that define, constitute, and mediate relations among citizens, society, markets and the state in the international arena – the wielders and objects of international public policy.

While states and the many institutions these states created for policy purposes remain the 'heart' of global governance and the global order, it was also evident that a wide variety of new actors had taken their place in the international system. As we noted, "Additionally, global governance encompasses a host of non-state actors including non-governmentals (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and various so-called multistakeholder organizations that some refer to as "regime complexes". Global governance, as we and others identified is increasingly a multilayered and multi-actor international environment. As we (Alexandroff and Brean 2015, 9) summarized at the time: "Global order today – using the perspective of global governance – is filled with state and non-state actors, with economic and political influence. And the global order encompasses an array of networks – both public, private, and mixed – that serve a growing number of leader gatherings."

Great Powers, Hegemony and Global Order Dynamics

As is evident from the conclusion of Part 1 in the then inaugural issue, we, the editors, contemplated that an accompanying article would examine the evolving structural issues, the role of power, and the actions of the great powers in the contemporary global order: "Part 2, in the next issue, will focus on structure and power and how summitry fits within established concepts of international relations while exploring traditional and not-so-traditional concepts of international cooperation."

Well, that article never formally appeared at the time. The classic global order examination of great powers, the dynamics of hegemonic powers, and the power dynamics of states and others never appeared. Nevertheless, we are fortunate that in this first Special Issue we can include the article by Kyle Lascurettes. As Lascurettes noted in his own summary: "Contrary to more conventional thinking about international order, the article argues that hegemonic orderers have often been motivated by competition and exclusion, advocating for order changes out of a desire to combat and weaken other actors rather than cooperatively engaging with them." Lascurettes bores deep into the power dynamics of the global order and the interactions of great powers historically and then through the period of US dominance and the creation of the liberal international order (LIO) and finally examining, the rise of China, the fading role of the US in the growing rivalry between the US and China. In that rivalry, Lascurettes describes a determined ideological contest: "…if China continues to rise without significant changes in its domestic political makeup at home, we can expect U.S. elites to redirect the principles of order to counter not only China's behavior but also the Chinese ideological model itself, sometimes referred to as "authoritarian capitalism"." As Lascurettes sees it, the product of growing US-China competition is: "the most likely outcome for the future is one where China designs its own hegemonic order to compete with rather than complement the contemporary liberal order."

Kerry Brown's contribution, "The EU, US and China: Hybrid Multilateralism and

the Limits of Prioritizing Values", alerts us to the geopolitical reality that great power dynamics are not just about US-China rivalry. There is in today's global order a complex relationship between Europe and China as well. And though currently the EU-China relationship has sharpened, Europe and the EU and various European powers, especially Germany have had hopes, and may yet in the future seek to develop further economic ties that at least during the long period of Chancellor Merkel's leadership sought to "… to balance economic self-interest with an acknowledgement that in terms of technology, security and political alignment, China is increasingly problematic." Of course, it is very likely that the war in Ukraine is likely in the short term at least to drive the EU and China further apart. But Brown tackles the very complex relationships of national governments and the European Union and where Europe and China relations may evolve particularly in the world of trilateral relations – US, China and Europe: "The question going forward therefore is not whether there should be a relationship with China, nor that that relationship was not hugely important, but more about where exactly in this trilateral division specific issues are actually placed, and whether the Europeans and the Americans agree with each other on how they have divided things."

Building on Global Summitry

But let's turn back for just a moment to the 2015 piece. There, Brean and I not only focused on global governance but not surprisingly also on 'global summitry' So, the second 'deep dive' as editors in that first issue was to tackle the key global order instrument, 'global summitry'. Here is how we defined global summitry at the time (Alexandroff and Brean 2015, 2):

> Global summitry involves the architecture, institutions and, most critically, the political and policy behavior of the actors engaged in the influence of outcomes of common concern in the international system. Global summitry includes all actors – international organizations, trans-governmental networks, states and non-state entities whether individuals, corporations or associations – that influence the agenda, the organization and the execution of global politics and policy.

The definition focused on international policymaking and the evident and growing variety of actors and influencers.

By the time of this 2015 publication, it was apparent to many observers that global summitry, and global governance more generally were focusing increasingly on the growing number of informal institutions – what we referred to then, and still do today, as the 'Rise of the Informals'. First in line in focusing on the Informals – the G7. The G7 had emerged in the 1970s and continued in various iterations, G5, G6 at Rambouillet followed a year later by the G7 with the inclusion of Canada at the Puerto Rico Summit and continuing on as the G7 till Russia was included in 1998. It would remain the G8 till Russia was suspended in 2014 with Russia's invasion of Crimea returning to the G7 and remaining so with Russia's withdrawal. We will return to that event in the light of the current dilemma posed by Russian membership in the G20 following the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Meanwhile, the much larger Informal, the G20, first appeared in the late 1990s as a gathering of finance ministers and central bankers from these economically significant states and then emerging

as a G20 leader-led informal institution in 2008 with the explosion brought on by the global financial crisis (GFC).

While these are not the only global summits, they remain quite central to the examination of global summitry. First as pointed by a number of our colleagues, global order dynamics witnessed a growing number of informal institutions. Our colleagues Vabulas and Snidal described these informals as IIGOs, or informal intergovernmental institutions which have come in the current global order to occupy central roles in global governance policymaking. As they note (2013,194): "IIGOs are becoming increasingly important in world politics. The "G groups" provide an important set of examples. International policymakers regularly use G20 venues to address the world's biggest financial challenges; G8 summits are attended by the world's most powerful heads of state and vehemently criticized by protestors." These Informals have come to dominate global governance though the earlier formal institutions, or FIGOs remain significant. That remains especially the case for the international financial institutions, or IFIs – Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – and additionally, the UN and its many specialized agencies. There remain questions over why the significant surge in the number of these informal institutions. This has been explored particularly by Charles Roger (2020) but a critical characteristic of a number of these Informals, and in particular the two mentioned above, the G7 and G20, is the fact these Informals are leader-led. These leader-led gatherings, include, as mentioned earlier, the most systemically significant states from the Global North and the Global South and these Informals meet on a regular basis. Informal or not, the fact that these Informals are leader-led and gather annual are standout features of the then G8, now the G7 again, and the G20.

While the annual leaders gatherings receive a significant amount of global attention, and their annual gatherings are extensively covered, little else is. But for some time, researchers had become aware that an extensive support structure had been constructed. Back in 2010 and 2011 I referred to the 'The Iceberg Theory' of global governance to take into account the growing bureaucratic structure being created notwithstanding that both Informals had no permanent secretariat. As I wrote then (Alexandroff 2011):

> It is frequently forgotten that the Gx system – most notably the G20 Leaders' Summit – is not just about leaders. In fact, there is a fair complement of personal representatives, ministers, other officials, IFIs and other IOs plus global regulators that make the Gx system work – or not. I've called this enlarged structural view of global governance "The Iceberg Theory" of Global Governance.

Today, we have a constant stream of governmental meetings from the periodic Sherpa meetings to organize the agenda, to repeated ministerial gatherings well beyond the traditional finance and central bankers – including even to include foreign ministers – to Task Forces and Working Groups. There is an extensive support effort backing up the evidently observable leader summits. I will return to this issue when examining how it might be possible to strengthen the G20.

Tackling the Legitimacy of the Global Governance Policy Process

For some time now questions have arisen over global governance efforts through the Informals. How legitimate are the efforts? This criticism was particularly evident when only the G7/8 existed. The membership was purely the Global North, what critics then called the G7, the 'Club of the Rich'. While the addition of the emerging market states in the G20 answered to a significant degree this criticism, there were many that still raised representativeness, especially when it came to various developing country regions especially Africa. Legitimacy and other criticisms have "dogged" the Informals. Our colleague Hugo Dobson, long an observer of global summitry raised several questions including in particular legitimacy, but also overlap and effectiveness (2007, 81). In 2010 (Alexandroff 2010, 8) I reviewed again some of issues raised by Dobson but extended to: legitimacy, informality, effectiveness, equality and like-mindedness.

There had long been critics of these two critical Informals – the G7/8 and the G20. Many have criticized the fact the limited membership, especially the G7/8. But it extends to the more member representative G20 which while it includes significant states from the Global North and significantly from the Global South still is criticized for the lack of legitimacy and effectiveness.

We were very fortunate, therefore, in this first Special Issue to have two colleagues examine in separate articles whether these global summitry states adequately reflect citizen concerns – legitimacy in other words, at the global governance level. Both articles, one by Philipp Bien and the other by Richard Wike suggest that citizens widely feel disenfranchised from these summit gatherings and their collective efforts to advance policies in the face of growing global governance challenges. These colleagues examined closely whether these global summitry states adequately reflect the concerns of their own citizenry. Philipp Bien suggested that "…we can observe growing disenfranchisement among segments of the public over the march of global governance and actions of distant policy-making elites (Fleurbaey 2018)". While the solutions each of our authors brings differ, both urge enhancing the legitimacy of these institutions – whether the G7 or the G20 – by adding a wider slice of society or in exploring societies views at least.

In his approach to legitimacy, Bien focuses on the isolation of national legislatures from intergovernmental and international policymaking. From Bien's perspective legislative involvement in global governance policy making can only enhance transparency and accountability. Bien also suggests that specialized legislative actors can be drawn for functional policy such as health or finance and general legislative actors can be drawn in for what Bien describes as general-purpose policymaking. Bien even suggests as a first step toward legislative inclusion that parliaments establish, for at least the G20, an engagement group, a P20, a Parliamentary 20 group as has been done for business, labor, thinktanks and more.

Our colleague, Richard Wike, is the director of global attitudes research at Pew Research Center. Not surprisingly he offers concerted international public opinion inquiry to enhance the legitimacy of global governance public policymaking. As he suggests in his piece, to bolster the legitimacy of global governance institutions "…and address the trust gap between ordinary citizens and international policy elites, multilateral institutions should consider employing and institutionalizing survey research to better understand public opinion on key global issues. Scholars, researchers, and practitioners have demonstrated that

survey research can be an effective approach for amplifying and including public voices." While there are problems in tapping public opinion in some states, notably authoritarian ones, Wike argues that polling can be done in non-democracies. He remains committed to survey research, which he believes "…can inform key audiences about the views, priorities, and values of everyday citizens across the globe." Beyond public opinion survey research Wike urges reaching out to a variety of actors – a wider multi-stakeholder approach to global governance policymaking.

Strengthening the G20

The growing geopolitical tensions whether US-China competition in the new Biden Administration era, or the mobilization of Russian forces surrounding Ukraine, and now the assault on the Ukraine have engendered split views over the question of 'strengthening the G20'. Colin Bradford's article is most direct in suggesting that the G20 is, and can be, a key instrument of global governance and capable even of mediating geopolitical tensions and a setting possibly for 'lowering the temperature' between the leading powers, China and the United States. As Bradford quotes from an earlier Brookings essay of his (2021): "The G-20 could become a vehicle for more ambitious concerted global actions and a platform for addressing and managing geopolitical tensions." Bradford promotes the centrality of the G20. As he urges: "The G20, however, provides the critical setting for global governance". For Bradford, the G20 offers the pluralistic setting and opportunity to advance global governance action and to mediate, possibly, the toxic US-China competition. As Bradford points out: "Plurilateral dynamics have already included China in G20 leadership roles in 2010 and 2016, if not also in other years, and reveals avenues for China's more formative integration into global governance." As Bradford concludes: "The G20 is a large and varied space. Going into the G20 setting requires imagination, thoughtfulness, listening, and sensitivity to difference rather than single-mindedness."

On the other side of the debate over the effectiveness of the G20 in advancing critical global governance collaboration are two articles in this SI: Johannes Linn's: "Can the G20 reform itself? Should it and can it?" and the piece by Yves Tiberghien: "Disrupted Order: G20 Global Governance at a Time of Geopolitical Crisis".

Linn has long been involved in the key Informals: the G7 and the G20. He has worked with Colin Bradford in urging the move of the G20 to a leaders-led summit. While there was success, there was as well significant disappointment as Linn chronicles. As a result, according to Linn: "…no major initiative has been under discussion, let alone executed, to bring reform to the G20 in a way that would strengthen the G20's ability to deal with major global crises or to make it more effective in addressing chronic global challenges. In short, the last crisis left the G20 appearing divided, weak, and irrelevant, even as the G7 reappeared as a forum for concerted action among the Western democracies, …" Moreover, Linn assesses a number of recent G20 reform proposals by his long-time close colleague Colin Bradford. These substantive reforms have been promoted by Bradford as Lead co-chair of the CWD including: promoting pluralism in the G20, as noted earlier; adding selected security issues to the agenda of the G20; empowering ministers to lead G20 dialogues; strengthening multilateral agencies; aligning G20 agendas more closely with the concerns of their publics; and setting up a permanent secretariat for the G20. In the final view from Linn, he remains a sympathetic sceptic: "Even as one might feel that more fundamental G20 reform

is needed, it will be appropriate to scale expectations to more modest targets …"

Tiberghien's examination reflects a global order picture far more competitive than in the recent past. Tiberghien focuses on the outcome of the most recent G20 hosted by Italy in October 2021. What he sees is are growing challenges to the G20. As he describes it:

> Indeed, the G20 summit process in late 2021 faced an extremely challenging mission: it was tasked with reconciling the enduring reality of economic and environmental interdependence with the other reality of serious ongoing disruptions. These disruptions included: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change challenges, the digital and AI revolutions, social backlash against global capitalism in some countries, and a growing great power rivalry between China and the United States.

Tiberghien recognizes the G20 as a key institution for promoting collective action in the global order but what he sees is the current failure of leadership in the G20. As he points out in the summary: "…leaders of major countries have increasingly engaged in cognitive dissonance: there is a fast-growing gap between their continued official support for G20 procedures and their refusal to cooperate with each other. The G20 may have become a limited safety net of sorts, or a custodian of increasingly limited norms of cooperation." As Tiberghien describes later in his article: "it seems to me that the period of 2017-2021 marked a change of dominant global governance paradigm for key players. The period moved from a minimal shared management of global interdependence to competitive disengagement with only limited coordination."

This is clearly a quite downbeat appraisal of the effectiveness of the G20. While Tiberghien chronicles the limited advances in policymaking from the G20, namely on climate change, sustainable development and the UN Agenda 2030 and some progress on global taxation, there is policy stalemate on the biggest systemic issues: the global pandemic, cyber and AI and trade and inequality. As Tiberghien points out the current Russian aggression against Ukraine makes collaboration even more difficult and raises the prospect of further fragmenting of the global order. As Tiberghien concludes: "In fact, the G20 is currently unable to truly function as the incubator for the reforms of global governance institutions that the world needs to manage global markets and pressing systemic risks."

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The Life and Times of America's Liberal International Order: A Reflection of Power Politics, Not an Escape from Them

Kyle Lascurettes

Why do hegemonic actors set up and then change international orders – or the particular set of rules that set parameters for states' behavior on the world stage – when and as they do? This essay examines American motives in founding the so-called liberal international order after the Second World War and then expanding it after the Cold War. Contrary to more conventional thinking about international order, I argue that hegemonic orderers have often been motivated by competition and exclusion, advocating for order changes out of a desire to combat and weaken other actors rather than cooperatively engaging with them. And contrary to the narrative supported by the liberal order's fiercest advocates, I posit that the United States fits comfortably within this historical record rather than transcending it. Viewing the life and times of the liberal international order through a broader historical lens, this essay contends, can help illuminate why this order served American interests so well for decades but is under increasing strain today. In particular, the essay concludes by examining how the United States and China view the liberal order today, what history suggests they may seek to do with it tomorrow, and what these dynamics portend for calls to elevate fora like the G20 to address contemporary international problems.

Why do powerful countries seek to enact major changes to international order, the broad set of rules that set parameters for states' behavior on the world stage? This query is particularly important today, as observers have questioned the United States' continued commitment to the very order it was responsible for building after World War II. It also ties in with concerns about the future, especially uncertainty over whether or not China will seek to replace this order with something fundamentally new. Clearly, assessing the future of world politics necessitates an understanding of great power motives *vis-à-vis* international order.

Even so, the very idea of the American-led order itself – often called the "liberal international order" – is more controversial today than ever. On one side are those who believe this liberal order is exceptional – meaning it is unique when compared to typical orders of the past – as well as weighty, meaning it has significant effects on important international outcomes. Its advocates argue that it was crafted by the United States with precisely these considerations in mind, and above all for the purpose of realizing a more peaceful, just, and prosperous world. A "distinctive type of international order was constructed after World War II," argues Princeton University's John Ikenberry, a leading

advocate of this perspective. In spite of America's unprecedented preponderance of power at that time, "its power advantages were muted and mediated by an array of postwar rules, institutions, and reciprocal political processes" where, for the first time in history, "weaker and secondary states were given institutionalized access to the exercise of [the preponderant state's] power."[1] (Ikenberry 2011, 7)

On the other side are those who decry all the attention and praise heaped upon the liberal order. Some critics argue that its effects on outcomes have been exaggerated. (Schweller 2001; Allison 2018; Staniland 2018; Glaser 2019) Others contest the very existence of such an order in the first place. "Not only did a liberal order never truly exist," argues Patrick Porter, a prominent skeptic, but "Such an order cannot exist. Neither the USA nor any power in history has risen to dominance by being ethical, straight or truthful, or by supporting allies, not without a panoply of darker materials."[2] (Porter 2020, 8) To argue otherwise, skeptics say, is to promote a narrative of postwar American foreign policy that is not grounded in reality.

In moving the debate forward, I take a position between these extremes but closer to the critical view. The optimists' perspective has some merit in that we can identify a distinct and intentionally crafted set of order principles that constitutes the "liberal international order." Furthermore, this order has paid tangible dividends to the United States and its Western allies, thus affecting important international outcomes.

Nevertheless, for the rest of this essay I argue that the skeptics tell a more convincing story about American motives surrounding the liberal order's origins. And as I demonstrate, this story more closely aligns with broader patterns of hegemonic powers' order-building motives throughout history. Contrary to more conventional thinking about international order, then, the actual historical record reveals that order building has often in fact been a strategic and deeply exclusionary practice. And contrary to the narrative supported by the liberal order's fiercest advocates, the United States fits comfortably within this historical record rather than transcending it. Viewing the life and times of the liberal international order through a broader historical lens, I argue, can help illuminate why this order served American interests so well for decades but is under increasing strain today.

I develop these arguments in six steps. After first offering a basic conceptual definition for "international order," I highlight four patterns that emerge from examining the history of great power (or hegemonic) order building in the modern international system. Third, I consider the contents of the liberal order itself and make a case for what should and should not be included in its conception. Fourth and fifth, I briefly chronicle the two periods that proved critical for cultivating this order: its creation by U.S. elites at the end of the Second World War, and its extension by American leaders at and after the end of the Cold War. Sixth and finally, I examine how the United States and China view the liberal order today, what history suggests they may seek to do with it tomorrow, and what these dynamics

[1] See also James Goldgeier, "The Misunderstood Roots of the Liberal International Order—and Why They Matter Again," *The Washington Quarterly* 41, No. 3 (2018); Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal World: The Resilient Order," *Foreign Affairs* 97, No. 4 (2018); and Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, "The Committee to Save the World Order: America's Allies Must Step Up as America Steps Down," *Foreign Affairs* 97, No. 6 (2018).

[2] See also Naazneen Barma, Ely Ratner and Steven Weber, "The Mythical Liberal Order," *The National Interest* 124 (2013); and Andrew J. Bacevich, "The 'Global Order' Myth," *The American Conservative*, June 15, 2017, http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-global-order-myth/.

portend for calls to elevate fora like the G20 to address contemporary international problems.

What is 'International Order'?

The term "international order" has been employed in many ways and for many purposes. (Tang 2016) While more complex definitions are occasionally useful, we can use the term here to denote the simple fact that actors of a regional or international system are regularly observing a common set of general rules. More specifically, an ordered system in modern world politics is one where a common set of rules is observed by a majority of that system's states. (Bull 1977)

These rules or "order principles" come in two major types: those that govern international behavior and relations between states – behavior rules – and those that govern internal behavior and dictate the kinds of actors allowed full recognition and rights in the system – membership rules. Behavior rules often correspond to, for example, if and when it is appropriate for actors to use military force or intervene in other states' internal affairs. Membership rules pertain to minimum internal standards actors must meet to be considered full participants of the order, such as adhering to a certain regime type or domestic economic system, for instance. (Lascurettes 2020, 15-16; Lascurettes and Poznansky 2021, 1-4)

Not all orders throughout history have been constructed by great powers. Yet many of the most important changes to order principles have in fact been dictated by the most powerful actors in their respective systems. At a time when understanding American and Chinese views about the liberal international order has become an increasing priority, focusing on this subset of orders – or what are often called *hegemonic* orders – seems particularly important.[3] (Cooley and Nexon 2020, 41)

Why Do Great Powers Create Hegemonic Orders?

What motivates great powers to construct new hegemonic orders where and how they do? In seeking to explain this phenomenon, prior accounts have focused on the consensus-driven and inclusive motivations of the would-be orderers. (Osiander 1994; Ikenberry 2001; Clark 2005) Neglected in these accounts, however, is the surprising degree to which orderers have often been motivated by competition and exclusion, advocating for order changes out of a desire to combat and weaken other actors rather than cooperatively engaging with them. In particular, analyzing great power politics from the 17th century to the present illuminates four important patterns of hegemonic ordering. (Lascurettes 2020, Chapter 3)

First and foremost, great powers' advocacy for significant order changes almost always comes in reaction to major threats on the horizon. The powers of the 1600s designed the famous Peace of Westphalia to target the imperial and religious forces they found so threatening to their survival, while the Peace of Utrecht in the 1700s was centered around imposing limits on the actor all of Europe feared at the time, Louis XIV's France. Even orders historians have characterized as "liberal" for their times were in fact often initially set up as reactionary responses to combat rather than promote liberal forces. For instance, the vanquishers of Napoleon in the early 1800s created the so-called Concert of Europe to

[3] On hegemonic orders more generally, see G. John Ikenberry and Daniel H. Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders," *Security Studies* 28, No. 3 (2019).

contain and then stamp out the transnational spread of political liberalism across the continent. And even U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's vision for a new world order in the early 1900s came together out of a perceived need to respond to the radicalism unleashed across the world by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. (Levin 1968)

Second, even when great powers have had the opportunity to pursue fundamental order changes, in the *absence* of perceived threats on the horizon these same actors have often chosen order continuity over order change. Sometimes this advocacy is passive, such as when hegemonic Britain declined to pursue more radical, punitive, and transformative order changes in the aftermath of the Seven Years' and Crimean Wars. At other times the push for order continuity has been more overt, as it was when the United States insisted on the continuation of its liberal security order after 1990 even as the Cold War was ending.

Third, great powers have strategically weaponized order principles against their perceived adversaries in a variety of creative ways. One technique involves severing the very social ties through which the threatening entities derive power. After achieving *military* victory in the Thirty Years' War, for instance, France and Sweden feared *political* encirclement by the powerful Habsburg and Holy Roman empires. So in the famous Westphalian settlements of 1648, these powers enacted an order rule that granted unprecedented autonomy to the hundreds of small principalities that their imperial foes were built upon – a principle that has come to be known as "state sovereignty" – that forever destroyed the universalist authority claims that had made these empires so threatening in the first place. (Croxton 2013)

Another such strategy entails delegitimizing a rival's easiest pathway to amassing further influence. Take for example Britain's order strategy in the Utrecht settlements of the early 1700s. Above all, English leaders feared for their country's security from Bourbon France, a menace to the entire continent both for its enormous material advantages and for King Louis XIV's well-known ambitions for conquering all of Europe. In response, Britain built an order that targeted the French ruler's favorite technique for amassing power: the use of family marriages to bring foreign kingdoms under his control. By using the Utrecht settlement to outlaw any territorial gains acquired through dynastic ties, English elites were able to instantly cut off the Sun King's preferred means for expanding French influence. (Osiander 1994, Chapter 3)

Fourth and finally, as the nature of hegemonic orderers' perceived threats has expanded, so too have their order strategies designed to beat back these threats. Since the 19th century, in fact, would-be orderers have often felt threatened at least as much by rival *ideologies* – ideas about how to best organize a domestic society – as they have by rival kingdoms or states. (Walt 1996; Haas 2005; Owen IV 2010) And crucially, it is when they are facing ideological threats – those wielding not only formidable military might but also formidable ideological appeal to a broad, transnational audience – that hegemonic orderers are most likely to advocate for the deepest and most penetrating changes to international order.

For example, it was no coincidence that the architects of the Concert of Europe in the early 1800s created the first order centered around an overt principle of membership. They did so out of fear for the first truly ideological threat in world politics, Revolutionary France. For the victors of the Napoleonic Wars, enacting new behavior rules to control states' interactions remained an important but insufficient weapon to forestall revolutionary contagion and upheaval from *within* societies, an entirely new kind of menace at the time.

Today the Concert is often remembered as progressive for its time. Yet it was actually and ironically *anti*-liberal in the content of its order principles, as it explicitly privileged and protected conservative and monarchical governments while harassing and excluding liberal ones. (Lascurettes 2017)

Similarly, we can best understand the American pattern of order building in the 1940s if we view it through the prism of the military *and* ideological threat posed by the Soviet Union after the Second World War. The origins and evolution of this liberal international order are my focus for the remainder of the essay.

Defining the Liberal Order

Observers sometimes posit that the liberal international order (LIO) forged by the United States in the aftermath of World War II is categorically different from other hegemonic orders not only in content but also in form, representing an entirely novel – and better – system of interstate relations. (Ikenberry 2001, Chapter 2) In point of fact, however, there is little reason for treating the LIO as anything other than a particular flavor of hegemonic order, distinct from but comparable to orders of other eras. What makes it "liberal" isn't some wholesale rejection of the broad organization or fundamental nature of international relations, but simply the classically liberal content of its order principles. In particular, at its founding in the 1940s the LIO was premised on five foundational rules of behavior and membership that each in some way corresponded with classical liberal ideals. Two of these rules focused on economic matters, while the other three were more germane to international security. (Lascurettes 2020, 166-173)

The Liberal Order

On the economic side of the LIO leger, members pledged via a behavior rule to work multilaterally to advance international standardization and stability, and, above all, economic openness (LIO rule 1: economic openness and multilateralism). Supplementing this first principle was an accompanying membership rule: governments were charged to accept greater responsibility for the general welfare of their citizens than ever before (rule 2: social welfare). On the security side of the liberal order's leger, a new behavior rule established an explicit collective security guarantee amongst the order's members (rule 3: collective security). Further defining who "they" were was a principle limiting LIO membership to those with democratic political institutions at home (rule 4: liberal democracy). Finally, perhaps the rule most central to the entire edifice was a principle of behavior that created a liberal security community and society amongst the order's members. Above all, this community/society succeeded in establishing unusually porous boundaries between and unprecedented cooperation amongst the liberal order's mostly liberal members (rule 5: liberal security community).[4]

These five rules were established and then enshrined in a number of the key international organizations of the postwar era. LIO rules 1 and 2 were consecrated in the

[4] For a distinct yet compatible take that characterizes what I call a liberal security community as a "guiding coalition," see Michael J. Mazarr, "Preserving the Post-War Order," *The Washington Quarterly* 40, No. 2 (2017).

Bretton Woods institutions – particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – as well as in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). If rule 1 established an open and interdependent world economy, rule 2 ensured that governments did the necessary work to protect their citizens from that world economy's natural ebb and flow. This combination of international openness and domestic protection has come to be known as "embedded liberalism." (Ruggie 1982)

LIO principles 3, 4, and 5 were embodied in the North Atlantic Treaty and its resulting organization, NATO. While NATO has sometimes been characterized as a regional redraft of the United Nations (UN), from its beginning it was always much more than this. Yes, establishing true collective security where the UN had failed (rule 3) was its core purpose and mission, but so was promoting explicit democratic membership (rule 4) and establishing a security community and society amongst its democratic members (rule 5). While this last principle was strengthened via NATO, it originated even earlier, in the decisions to extend unprecedented amounts of aid to Europe via the Marshall Plan. And because the aid recipients agreed in exchange to band together and begin cooperating in unprecedented ways, the Marshall Plan is sometimes seen as the first step along a pathway culminating in the European Union (EU). (Rappaport 1981)

Not the Liberal Order

Notice now what is *not* a part of this LIO conception: the United Nations (UN) itself, sovereign equality and non-intervention, great power supremacy, self-determination and decolonization, and the arms control and human rights regimes, to name but a few elements often lumped in with the liberal order.[5] Many of these things were (and are) elements of a larger set of *global* order principles that have often existed alongside the LIO. Yet they are not actually part of the liberal order itself. We can briefly consider each in turn.

First, the bedrock principles upon which the UN was founded – sovereign equality, non-intervention, great power supremacy – predate the founding of the LIO. They actually also predate the United Nations itself, though the UN Charter was certainly important in formalizing and reaffirming them. Second, the recognition of all nations' self-determination and the accompanying wave of mass decolonization were without doubt important developments in the postwar world. Yet they were not the work of the LIO, whose core members were ambivalent if not openly hostile toward colonial independence at the time. (Mazower 2009) The international arms control regime, as well as any of the agreements and institutions the United States and Soviet Union forged together during the Cold War, were the result of negotiations *across* orders rather than a product of the LIO itself. (Glaser 2019) Finally, while a greater respect for human rights has arguably become part of the

[5] For more expansive LIO conceptions, see Christian Reus-Smit, "The Liberal International Order Reconsidered," in *After Liberalism?: The Future of Liberalism in International Relations*, ed. Rebekka Friedman, Kevork Oskanian, and Ramon Pacheco (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Stewart Patrick, "World Order: What, Exactly, are the Rules?" *The Washington Quarterly* 39, No. 1 (2016); Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Current International Order* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2016); Rebecca Friedman Lissner and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "The Day After Trump: American Strategy for a New International Order," *The Washington Quarterly* 41, No. 1 (2018), 8-12; and Alastair Iain Johnston, "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations," *International Security* 44, No. 2 (2019).

contemporary LIO – a development I return to later – for most of its history the concept of "human rights" was not a core component of the liberal order.

Building the Liberal Order

Much of the confusion over the LIO's contents as well as its origins stems from the fact that, as mentioned earlier, the United States led the way in constructing not one but two distinct orders after the Second World War. There was a universalist *global* vision of order – manifested most prominently in the UN – and a smaller *Western* vision of order – comprised of the five LIO principles and corresponding institutions detailed earlier. Even those who recognize this distinction sometimes posit that these layers were complementary, representing an evolving but not contradictory American strategy to build a multilayered international order. (Ikenberry 2011, Chapter 5)

This reasoning suffers from a hindsight bias, however. For American leaders at the time, the Western liberal order was never intended to fit within the global one. Instead, it was considered as an *alternative* to universalist world order and became a priority only when that global vision failed to deliver on its initial promises. The primary story of American order building in the 1940s is the extraordinary transition away from a more inclusive vision of global order to a smaller Western vision of order that was far more exclusive.

Furthermore, we can best account for this extraordinary transition by examining shifting American threat perceptions at the time. While elites began by focusing on the global vision of order that served their interests so long as they were most focused on the power of Nazi Germany and the ideology of fascism, they soon became as wary of the threat posed by their wartime ally the Soviet Union. It was at this point, and in response to heightening perceptions of an emerging Soviet threat, that American elites began prioritizing the more exclusive Western order vision over the inclusive global one. (Lascurettes 2020, 173-206)

Liberal Security Order

Simply stated, it isn't difficult to trace the three security principles of the LIO (rules 3, 4, and 5) to the emerging Soviet and communist threats in the late 1940s. As Graham Allison plainly put it, "Had there been no Soviet threat, there would have been no Marshall Plan and no NATO." (Allison 2021; Tierney 2021)

The principal objective behind the Marshall Plan was to provide Europe with the capacity to halt the westward movement of both communist ideology and Soviet military power. (Steil 2018) To address the communist ideological threat, U.S. officials told Europe's leaders that kicking or keeping communists out of their governments would be a condition for participating in the aid program.[6] To address Soviet military power, the Marshall Plan called for unprecedented coordination amongst the states of Europe. American officials made clear that they would only support a massive aid package if it demonstrated "substantial evidence of a developing overall plan for economic cooperation by the Europeans themselves" that could culminate in "economic federation." (FRUS 1947) In other words, it

[6] They also disingenuously offered the same aid to Eastern European states already under Soviet influence as a trojan horse of sorts, intending to use this offer to drive a wedge through the communist bloc while weakening Soviet control over it.

was premised on building Europe into an independent third force that could resist communist subversion as well as Soviet invasion. This mission would be continued through NATO.

It is already well established that NATO was founded in response to perceptions of the growing Soviet menace. (Sayle 2019, 11-17) What remains less appreciated is how the *shape* NATO took was also a deliberate response to this threat. Often forgotten is that it was the United States, not the governments of Europe, that insisted the organization be a consensual and positively-purposed one – a genuinely multilateral pact directed toward a common ideological vision of shared values – rather than a barebones hierarchical alliance solely premised on deterring a military attack.

American officials favored this particular vision of NATO precisely *because* it would be superior to a traditional alliance in combating all aspects of the Soviet material and ideological threat. First, by emphasizing the importance of democratic membership and liberal solidarity, NATO would help the requisite states fight the most immediate menace: the ideological threat of internal communist subversion. "The problem at present is less one of defense against overt foreign aggression than against internal fifth-column aggression supported by the threat of external force," argued the State Department's John Hickerson, a key NATO architect, at the time of its founding. (FRUS 1948a)

Second, U.S. officials recognized that a consensual and positively purposed alliance would offer a favorable contrast to the coercive and hierarchical eastern bloc the Soviets were constructing in the eyes of the international community. The North Atlantic pact "would lose a great deal of its moral strength," argued Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett, "if it appeared merely to be aimed at the Soviet Union" militarily rather than representing the embodiment of anti-Soviet behavior and ideology. (FRUS 1948b) It was thus designed in the form that it ultimately took in part to draw a favorable contrast to Soviet relationships with their own "allies" in Eastern Europe.

Liberal Economic Order

The connection between the Soviet threat and the LIO's economic principles is more circuitous but still easy enough to trace. The fact that the Soviets were invited to the Bretton Woods Conference is sometimes used as evidence that the LIO was relatively inclusive. Yet that conference was held in 1944, at a time when U.S. elites were still primarily focused on the German/fascist threat. Accordingly, the LIO's economic principles were initially designed to target those entities rather than Soviet/communist ones.

The first economic principle of the LIO, economic multilateralism and openness (rule 1), was enacted to combat a key component of the Nazi threat: autarkic and mercantilist policies that created closed economic blocs. And the targeting of fascist ideology was manifest in the membership rule charging regimes with greater responsibility for the domestic welfare of their citizens (rule 2). Key officials of the Franklin Roosevelt administration believed that a focus on individual rights in this way would provide a favorable contrast to fascism's subordination of the individual to nation or race.

Yet while neither economic LIO principle was initially designed to target the USSR and communism, it would prove easy enough to repurpose them in that direction in the subsequent years. Furthermore, though the Soviets were formally invited to Bretton Woods, it quickly became clear that their participation would only take place on American terms. This meant that the USSR would have to open its economy as well as those of its client states

to market forces and unprecedented international scrutiny. For a communist non-democracy to do all of this only to join an economic system openly premised on private enterprise and individual rights would have been a supremely tall order. It is little surprise that the Soviets ultimately declined the Bretton Woods invitation and membership offers.

Once they did so, however, the economic components of the LIO were quickly redirected in an anti-Soviet direction. Through sidelining economic aid programs overseen by the UN and rerouting them through the Bretton Woods institutions and Marshall Plan, U.S. elites succeeded in rapidly choking off Western exchange with the Soviet sphere. This effort remained ad hoc until 1949, when American leaders led the way in forging a coordinated export control regime with their European allies, the Coordinating Committee or CoCom. (Pollard 1985; Mastanduno 1992)

In sum, American apprehension over the daunting material and ideological gains made by the USSR in the 1940s is the single most important element in explaining the United States' founding blueprint for the liberal order that remains with us to this day. That Soviet threat is *the* critical force in explaining the monumental shift in America's ordering strategy from global inclusion to Western exclusion, and the story of the LIO's origins simply cannot be told without it. Furthermore, the "liberal" nature of this order's content was not preordained by the fact that the United States was a liberal power. Instead, it had much more to do with the anti-liberal nature of the actor and ideology it was specifically designed to combat, discredit, and exclude.

Expanding the Liberal Order

The liberal order proved enormously successful in helping America exclude, isolate, encircle, and antagonize the Soviet Union, ultimately vanquishing its ideological appeal and then blunting its material might. With the end of the Cold War, however, the United States suddenly found itself in an environment characterized by the *absence* of major threats. Looking out onto this altered strategic landscape, President George H.W. Bush could only identify "apathy" and "unpredictability" (Meacham 2015, 402) as America's principal security challenges, while the incoming administration of Bill Clinton perceived "a world that would be broadly stable" and appeared "remarkably benign." (Slocombe 2011, 78-79) "I'm running out of demons," quipped Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for both presidents. "I'm down to Castro and Kim Il Sung." (Army Times 1991)

Even so, in the years since the Cold War ended the United States has forcefully sought continuity in the Western and liberal vision of order rather than fundamental change. While this may at first appear surprising, it comfortably fits with the second pattern of hegemonic ordering highlighted earlier: in the absence of new threats, great powers will pursue continuity in existing order principles rather than change. Continuity should not be mistaken for inclusivity, however. Instead, America's ordering strategy since the decline and fall of the Soviet Union has just as often been motivated by competition and exclusion as it was at the Cold War's apex.

Take for instance U.S. behavior in Europe in 1989-90. (Lascurettes 2020, 208-227) In a period ripe with possibilities for change – a visionary Soviet leader who sought to move beyond superpower competition, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the possibility of peaceful German reunification – American elites were steadfast in pursuing continuity in the liberal

security order rather than even entertaining the possibility for transformative change. This meant that even as Mikhail Gorbachev called for the superpowers to scrap their Cold War alliances and build something fundamentally new, the Bush administration remained adamant that the United States would accept nothing less than a fully reunified Germany fully integrated into a NATO that would remain the premier security institution of Europe. (Sarotte 2009)

At each step along the way in those fateful months, the Bush team used America's advantages in the LIO to discredit the transformative plans of other actors while disadvantaging or shutting out the Soviets in the negotiations over Germany and NATO. Through diplomatic skill as well as outright deception, they ultimately succeeded in pressuring their former adversaries into accepting the continuation of NATO even as the Warsaw Pact disbanded, the reunification of Germany on Western terms, and, most dramatically, full NATO membership for this reunified actor. Evidence simply does not support the oft-made contention that "U.S. foreign policy at the end of the Cold War was generous and inclusionary." Instead, concludes the historian Mary Sarotte, "shielding that status quo in an era of dramatic change became the United States' highest priority." (2010, 135-136)

Continuity in and expansion of the LIO remained the overriding goal of American grand strategy even after the USSR's dissolution. On the economic front, at America's urging the IMF welcomed 20 former communist countries into its ranks practically overnight, while American leaders of both parties led the way in transforming the GATT into a full-fledged World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. To be sure, these developments had inclusive elements for some. Yet as with the initial Bretton Woods invitation, post-Soviet Russia in particular soon found that promises of inclusivity would occur only on American terms.[7] (Mazower 2012, 355-356)

Furthermore, while U.S. leaders spoke frequently about wanting to integrate outsiders like Russia and China into the LIO as partners, American behavior in the security sphere often contradicted their rhetoric. The leaked Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) document in 1992 revealed U.S. opposition to multipolarity in favor of enhancing U.S. primacy. The means for achieving this would involve not only maintaining military superiority but also broadening the reach of the liberal order. Though the Clinton administration repudiated the language of the DPG upon entering office, they essentially followed through on its prescriptions for extending the LIO's principles to as much of the world as possible. (Leffler 2017, 261-272) They couldn't have been much clearer about this objective than in declaring that "the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement – enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies." (Edelman 2011, 79)

These plans culminated in the fateful American decisions, first, to offer NATO membership to the states of the former Soviet sphere; and second, to begin sidelining the UN Security Council (UNSC) in favor of the more exclusive NATO as the premier institution for legitimizing the use of force abroad. The former decision is today bitterly resented in Russia. The latter decision – the earliest manifestation of which was NATO's humanitarian war in Serbia in 1999 that commenced without UNSC authorization – remains a deeply

[7] There was no new Marshall Plan for the former Soviet bloc, for instance. And despite Western promises associated with economic "shock therapy," it became clear to Russia by the late 1990s that the amount of tangible aid necessary for fulfilling those promises would not be forthcoming from the United States.

troubling development for both Russia and China. Whether or not U.S. elites anticipated these reactions, they were choices that sprouted from an overriding desire to expand the scope and influence of the LIO at any cost. (Ikenberry 2020, 233-246; Mearsheimer 2018, Chapter 5)

The Future of The Liberal Order

Stepping back, this brief chronicle of the LIO's life and times reveals that hegemonic international orders – even liberal ones – are typically more a product of power politics than an escape from them. Unfortunately for many of its advocates, the United States and the liberal order it created and then expanded in the 20th century are wholly unexceptional in this regard.

These findings can help us shed light onto an uncertain future of hegemonic ordering. And two questions about present and potential future hegemonic orderers loom above all others. First, what changes to the liberal order might the United States advocate as it declines in relative power yet remains an influential orderer? Second, what might its projected hegemonic successor, China, do with the LIO once it too becomes a hegemonic actor capable of shaping order on a regional or even global scale? Addressing these questions will help illuminate why the prospects of Sino-American cooperation on order-level issues are currently so bleak.

America and the LIO in the Near Term

Assuming the United States remains motivated by the same competitive impulses that have fueled the liberal order project thus far, we can expect leaders to continue assessing the LIO's utility by its ability to combat America's greatest perceived rivals and challengers. And, at least for the moment, no threat appears to loom larger to American statesmen of both political parties than that of a rising China. It follows that the United States will judge the continuing usefulness of the LIO by whether it can be used to target and weaken China.

This observation yields two more specific predictions about American ordering behavior in the coming years. First, as China continues to gain on the United States in aggregate power, American leaders will increasingly attempt to redirect LIO principles against China. Their focus will at least initially be on targeting the types of international behaviors that they believe most benefit Chinese power and influence. But second, if China continues to rise without significant changes in its domestic political makeup at home, we can expect U.S. elites to redirect the principles of order to counter not only China's behavior but also the Chinese ideological model itself, sometimes referred to as "authoritarian capitalism." (Gat 2009; Halper 2010; Milanovic 2020)

On this second point in particular, predicting American advocacy of even deeper and more far-reaching changes to the LIO in the near future might at first sound farfetched. After all, many observers see the recently departed Trump administration's apparent disdain for the liberal order as an aberration. More specifically, they characterize his as the first and only of the postwar administrations that failed to recognize the LIO's inherent value and at the same time view (with relief) Joe Biden's victory as a fundamental repudiation of the Trumpian disdain for the LIO. (Patrick 2017; Ikenberry 2017; Miller 2017; Posen 2018;

Stokes 2018; Daalder and Lindsay 2018; Haass 2020) Yet this set of assumptions belies the fact that both Republican *and* Democrat presidents had begun signaling their discontent with important aspects of the LIO well before Trump took office. More specifically, while the overall trajectory of America's post-Cold War order strategy has been one of continuity amidst its global expansion, a case can be made that a package of subtle but significant LIO modifications has had bipartisan buy-in as far back as the 1990s. (Chan 2021)

Most striking in this regard has been a movement to incorporate an additional criterion into the liberal conception of order membership: a baseline respect for the "human rights" of all peoples under a regime's purview (potential LIO rule 6). In the past, human rights abuses were typically treated as domestic matters walled off from international scrutiny. In the post-Cold War era, by contrast, the United States has increasingly led the way in reconceptualizing such abuses as *international* dangers as much as domestic ones. "The sovereignty of individual governments is not absolute," argued Strobe Talbott, Clinton's Deputy Secretary of State, in giving voice to this shift in thinking. "A national government that systematically and massively abuses its own citizens" risks "being put out of business" by the international community.[8] (Chollet and Goldgeier 2008, 216) If the meaning of "put out of business" isn't clear here, one need only ask for an adequate translation from the regimes of Milošević, Hussein, or Gaddafi.

Hand in hand with this has been U.S. advocacy for a related but additional order principle of behavior, one that would further weaken state sovereignty while legitimizing more frequent military interventions undertaken to advance liberal ends (potential LIO rule 7). (Finnemore 2003, Chapters 3-4; Legro 2005, 168-169, 178; Barma, Ratner and Weber 2013, 61; Christensen 2015, 59-62; Cooley and Nexon 2020, 58; Ashford and Denison 2020) Only time will tell if this rule change continues to gain traction, both in the international community as well as within the United States itself. But it is not hyperbole to say that its consecration would represent the most significant revision of the liberal order since its inception.[9] Not coincidentally, it is also the liberal order dynamic that most antagonizes America's potential hegemonic successor China today. (Rolland 2020)

China and the LIO in the Long Term

LIO advocates continue to argue that China mostly supports the liberal order, predicting that even in an unknowable future Chinese leaders are likely to ultimately keep its foundational principles in place. After all, they posit, why would China seek to fundamentally overturn a system of rules that allowed for its own meteoric rise in power and prosperity in the first place? (Ikenberry 2008)

This view once again belies past patterns of hegemonic ordering, however. Rather

[8] On NATO's 1999 Serbia campaign in particular as an exemplar of this approach, see Chollet and Goldgeier 2008, 211-234.

[9] Another major LIO rule change—the move from embedded liberalism to neoliberalism (or cosmopolitan liberalism)—is interesting and important but beyond the scope of this essay. See Jeff D. Colgan and Robert O. Keohane, "The Liberal Order is Rigged: Fix It Now or Watch It Wither," *Foreign Affairs* 96, No. 3 (2017); G. John Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94, No. 1 (2018), 21-23; John J. Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security* 43, No. 4 (2019), 38-42; and John M. Owen, 'To Make the World Select for Democracy, *Hedgehog Review* 22, No. 3 (2020).

than sticking with the liberal order, history suggests that China will eventually seek to advance a new vision of order designed to target its own perceived threats. And if current Sino-American tensions are any indication of what's to come, possibilities are ripe for China to use its future dominance to enact an order premised on targeting the United States and whatever remains of the American-led LIO. To put it even more plainly, the most likely outcome is one where China designs its own hegemonic order to compete with rather than complement the contemporary liberal order.

If this is the future that ultimately comes to pass, what form might China's alternative order vision take? Rather than a total rejection of all elements of the liberal order, history suggests that China will engage in selective and strategic revisions to it. Chinese leaders after all accept and even embrace important components of the LIO's behavior rules today, namely its commitments to global economic stability and openness that keep China's colossal export-oriented economy churning and growing. What they strongly reject are Western attempts to use the LIO's principles to dig down and meddle into members' domestic politics, passing judgment on human rights practices or even attempting to alter regime types. Indeed, China's greatest concerns about the LIO today involve not that order's behavior rules but its principles of membership.

The optimism that LIO advocates express about China's propensity to stick with the liberal order's existing rules comes in large part from the assumption that "there is simply no grand ideological alternative to a liberal international order," as John Ikenberry puts it. "China does not have a model that the rest of the world finds appealing." (Ikenberry 2018, 23) What Ikenberry is referring to here is the seeming lack of appeal for China's "authoritarian capitalist" ideological model outside of its own borders. Yet such optimism mistakenly assumes that a Chinese-led alternative to the LIO would have to contain an ideological component in the first place. There is a more plausible possibility, however. Rather than continuing on with an unchanged LIO or totally rejecting it in favor of an authoritarian capitalist one, China could choose to advance what we might call an "agnostic capitalist" order instead.[10]

An agnostic capitalist order would carry forward *some* of the LIO's principles, namely its rules of behavior promoting economic multilateralism and openness and perhaps also some basic form of collective security. The big distinction from the contemporary LIO would be the absence of *any* form of domestic conditionality for various regimes around the world via membership rules.[11] In other words, the order would be capitalist in its commitment to *international* free trade as well as at least rudimentary coordination over keeping the global economy afloat. Yet it would remain agnostic on the internal nature and issues of its member states, establishing a strict differentiation between the international and domestic and walling the latter off from external scrutiny.[12] As Chinese President Xi Jinping put it at the inaugural Belt and Road Forum in 2017, "we are ready to share practices of

[10] Mearsheimer also discusses "agnostic" orders in his "Bound to Fail" essay, but uses the concept differently than I do here.

[11] Other recent accounts that at least partially align with my analysis of Chinese order preferences include Shiping Tang, "China and the Future International Order(s)," *Ethics & International Affairs* 32, No. 1 (2018); and Johnston, "China in a World of Orders."

[12] But for an alternative prediction whereby China promotes an order vision that incentives autocratic membership, see John M. Owen, "Two Emerging International Orders? China and the United States," *International Affairs* 97, No. 5 (2021).

development with other countries, but we have no intention to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, export our own social system and model of development, or impose our own will on others." (Benabdallah 2018, 10)

Erecting such an order would help Chinese leaders advance their *defensive* objective of blocking the perceived expansion of Western-led liberal interventionism that has so agitated nondemocratic regimes in the post-Cold War era, China foremost among them. Yet it would also serve an *offensive* objective of enacting an alternative set of Chinese-led order rules more appealing to a broad swath of new members. Most promising here would be those developing states of the Global South that perceive increasing pressure under the principles and purview of the American-led LIO to rapidly and substantially liberalize major aspects of their domestic societies. (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021)

If this vision of an agnostic capitalist order comes to pass, the fundamental choice thus wouldn't be between hegemonic orders containing either democratic or authoritarian principles of membership. Instead, it would involve developing states choosing between an American-led liberal order often seen as imposing ever-increasing domestic burdens on its least capable members and a Chinese-led agnostic order offering such states the promise of freedom to forge their own domestic paths. (Stephen and Skidmore 2019, 87) From China's perspective, this would represent the kind of favorable contrast that could finally make the prospect of its hegemony more palatable – or even attractive – to much of the rest of the world. (Broz, Zhang and Wang 2020) And in a future characterized by competing superpower visions of international order, it is a proposition that could ultimately prove to be the winning one.

Sino-American Relations, the G20, and the Future of the LIO

None of the above should be taken to suggest that there will be outright military conflict between the world's two foremost superpowers. Yet it does portend slim prospects for meaningful cooperation between China and the United States on issues of order-level importance. Moreover, it represents the kind of fraught scenario that reforms to existing global governance institutions like the G20 – as comprehensive and well-intentioned as such reforms may be – are nonetheless unlikely to fix.

The LIO's advocates and optimists might note that even in the seemingly bleak analysis of the previous section, the fact that China's advocacy of an agnostic capitalist order does not represent a *total* rejection of the LIO suggests there is still room for compromise with the United States. The problem with such optimism, however, is that the LIO principle China remains most enthusiastic about – unfettered economic openness at the international level – is precisely the rule America has most strikingly soured on in recent years. This is no coincidence, as China favors this principle for the same reason the United States now questions its utility: both actors perceive it as a rule that currently helps rather than hinders China's ability to amass relative power and influence at others' expense. By the same logic that China sees it as advantageous, the United States increasingly views it as a Cold War relic no longer capable of contributing to a liberal-ordering-against-threats strategy that worked so well against the Soviet Union but now appears unsuited for combating America's competitors in the 21st century. Likewise, the LIO principles American elites continue to most enthusiastically champion today – those emphasizing liberal membership via the simultaneous delegitimization of sovereign barriers against intervention and the promotion

of human rights protections and democratic norms of governance (LIO rules 4 and 5 and proposed rules 6 and 7) – are precisely the elements China views as most objectionable and threatening.

These incompatibilities are unfortunate but not coincidental. So long as it remains a competitive and exclusionary process, great power order building between anticipated hegemonic rivals will necessarily remain a zero-sum endeavor. The implication that follows is that shifting gears to focus on "repairing international order" cannot serve as a lifeboat for fixing the relationship between China and the United States. Rather than a repudiation of *realpolitik*, throughout history hegemonic powers have in fact built and shaped orders to serve as *realpolitik*'s very instruments. Perhaps counterintuitively, the path forward for breaking such a cycle is for the powers to set aside rather than highlight order-related issues and focus instead on directly attempting to mend their own bilateral relationship. The only escape from the spiral of adversarial order building, in other words, is overcoming the adversarial relationship at its core.

This last point illustrates one of the shortcomings of reforming and re-empowering existing global governance institutions as a solution to fundamental problems today. Advocates of elevating an organization like the Group of Twenty (G20) believe that doing so would correct for the incongruity that exists between states' relative influence in the traditional institutions of the LIO on the one hand and the actual distribution of power in the 21st century on the other.[13] (Cooper 2010; Drezner 2014, 142-144; Kirton 2016; Hajnal 2019) That is certainly *a* problem, but it is not *the* fundamental problem this essay has argued is at the root of contemporary global governance woes.[14] So long as the United States and China view each other as their foremost competitor, no institution, organization, or order will prevent that competition from poisoning the well of sustained and meaningful cooperation at the global level.

It would be one thing if the G20 offered the promise of ameliorating core tensions in Sino-American relations. Yet operating through larger fora like the Group of Twenty often appears to only make these tensions worse; in such negotiations, each side works more to make the other look irresponsible or hostile and less to truly forge consensus over the most important and controversial issues.[15] Much as the liberal order failed to provide a magical lifeboat away from history and the reality of international conflict, so too will efforts to simply repair or repackage existing institutions come up short so long as they do not fix the fundamental great power relationship that will make or break the 21st century. A more formal and elevated G20 might be the *cause célèbre*, but an informal and flexible G2 is the only forum that stands a chance of moving the needle at the level of international order.

[13] For a more skeptical view, see Robert H. Wade, "Emerging World Order? From Multipolarity to Multilateralism in the G20, the World Bank, and the IMF," *Politics & Society* 39, No. 3 (2011).

[14] Indeed, recent analysis has found that at least in global financial institutions, representation concerns are not a primary driver of current grievances against American hegemony or the LIO. See Broz et al, "Explaining Foreign Support for China's Global Economic Leadership."

[15] For similar analysis, see Geoffrey Garrett, "G2 in G20: China, the United States and the World after the Global Financial Crisis," *Global Policy* 1, No. 1 (2010).

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Author biography

Kyle M. Lascurettes (@kylelascurettes) is Assistant Professor of International Affairs at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he teaches courses in global order, international organizations, and international relations theory. He is the author of *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations* (Oxford University Press 2020), winner of the 2021 APSA Jervis-Schroeder Prize for best book in international history and politics.

Governance Transition from G7 to G20 and to Asia and the Global South: Coping with US-China Relations in a Changing Global Summitry Context

Colin I. Bradford

An overview of the recent history of G20 summits reveals that the presence of a small group of experienced international leaders makes a difference in generating ambitious outcomes, but also that domestic political constraints increased by social divides raise the stakes while increasing the resistance to transformational change leadership. The emergence of toxic confrontational narratives in the bilateral US-China relationship poses a grave threat: geopolitical tensions could result in a bifurcated global order that most countries want to avoid. As a result, there is a need for shifts in the political dynamics to pluralize bipolar relations and refocus attention on generating effective governance rather than debating regime types – democracy versus autocracy. As the Asia-Pacific becomes more important in global affairs, the Biden presidency needs to shift its focus from groupings like the G7, the Quad, and the Summit for Democracy in 2021 to the Indonesia-led multilateral G20 in 2022 and the India-led G20 in 2023. These settings provide opportunities to engage in global public discourses which mirror the diversity embodied in the G20. The G20 is the appropriate global forum in which to transition to more pluralistic forms of global governance that are inclusive and effective and can meet the growing challenges to global governance.

Strengthening global governance by 'Strengthening the G20'

This Special Issue of the e-Journal Global Summitry, edited by the China-West Dialogue (CWD) co-chair, Alan Alexandroff, began with a focus on "strengthening global governance by strengthening the G20". This topic was drawn from several CWD virtual meetings in early 2021. From these virtual gatherings it appeared that the G20 is indeed a unique forum in which the increasing tensions between the United States and China could potentially be worked out in the G20 settings. That conclusion led me to write a Brookings paper which appeared in the "Order from Chaos" series (2021), "Strengthening the G20 in an era of great power geopolitical competition". That article contained multiple recommendations for strengthening the G20 as a means of strengthening global governance and easing, hopefully, geopolitical tensions between the United States and China.

A lot of global gatherings have come and gone. The G7 Summit in Cornwall in early

June 2021 hosted by the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson was followed immediately by President Biden's meetings with EU and NATO leaders in Brussels which in turn was followed by a Biden-Putin summit in Geneva on June 16th. A pause on global summitry over the summer ended with President Biden's speech to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 21, 2021. The Italian G20 Leaders' Summit then followed that, held in Rome from October 30-31st. That Summit was followed immediately by the Glasgow COP26 UN climate change summit that ran from November 1st to the 12th. The year in summitry ended with the Summit for Democracy, December 9th and 10th, convened by President Biden (2021b) to, as he expressed it, in his opening remarks:

> This gathering has been on my mind for a long time for a simple reason: In the face of sustained and alarming challenges to democracy, universal human rights, and – all around the world, democracy needs champions. And I wanted to host this summit because here is the – here in the United States, we know as well as anyone that renewing our democracy and strengthening our democratic institutions requires constant effort.

There are a number of lingering questions that 'hang over' these summits and are quite likely to influence global summitry and global governance going forward. The first question is: are the domestic political dynamics, primarily national elections, likely to produce national leaders in G20 countries who are capable of "strengthening global governance" by virtue of their backgrounds, experience, and domestic political support? Additionally, can we imagine ways in which the highly competitive geopolitical dynamics could be shifted in the next while, in part by using the G20 as a forum for facilitating US-China relations? If that is possible, can we see significantly enhanced collaboration, cooperation, and coordination? Can such greater collaboration result in enhanced outcomes in such vital global governance areas as global health, climate change, digital governance, and critically, also possibly advance domestic social inclusion? More on that below.

Domestic Political Dynamics and Global Leadership

Ambitious global leadership, at the G20 and elsewhere, vitally depends on the capacities and proclivities of the leaders of major countries, which in turn depend on the political dynamics in those countries. It is hardly possible to expect ambitious results from global governance fora unless there are leaders with global leadership skills. It is very much the case that the early successes of the G20 summits in these early years, 2008 through 2011, were a product in part of a large cluster of influential leaders within the G20. These G20 leaders possessed strong domestic political support and they themselves possessed leadership skills that reinforced their global governance policies.

In those early years, Barack Obama was in his first term as president of the United States; Angela Merkel was in the early years of her 16 year run as Chancellor of Germany; Nicolas Sarkozy, ambitious and feisty, was president of France; Kevin Rudd, a true multilateralist, was prime minister of Australia after being foreign minister; Manmohan Singh was prime minister of India after having been both foreign and finance minister; Lee Myung-bak was president of the Republic of Korea (Korea) for the Seoul G20 summit aided by Sakong Il, former finance minister who led as a super-minister for the Korea G20 year in 2010; Felipe Calderon was president of Mexico who played a significant role in 2009 in the

Copenhagen climate change summit and followed that up at the Los Cabos Mexico G20 Leaders' Summit; and, finally, Gordon Brown was prime minister of the UK (until May of 2010) after being finance minister which enabled him to steer the perhaps most important economic summit ever at the London G20 in April 2009. Eight of the 19 G20 leaders were experienced global leaders who played significant roles in the early G20 years, complemented by three other leaders, namely Hu Jintao of China toward the end of his ten-year term, Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the EU Commission, the 20th leader, and former prime minister of Portugal and Luiz Inacio Lula, popular president of Brazil, and former labor union leader.

Today, there seems, regrettably, a rather leaner pool of G20 leaders to draw on for global leadership. Joe Biden, Xi Jinping, Angela Merkel, who remained Chancellor while the leader of the SPD Olaf Scholz negotiated a new coalition, Emmanuel Macron (France), Mario Draghi (Italy), Justin Trudeau (Canada) and Boris Johnson (UK), all currently qualify. Six of these seven are from the G7 which leaves the rest of the world on a 'weaker footing', but China must be included not only because of the weight of China but because Xi Jinping, at least on the global summitry front, has consistently been a strong supporter of the United Nations. Japan was absent from the G20 gathering with a legislative election underway. Previously, Shinzo Abe who had been prime minister of Japan from 2012 to 2020, the interval between the halcyon years and the current period, had stepped down and his successor, Yoshihide Suga, had left office after a very short stint as prime minister to be replaced by Fumio Kishida.

The leadership prospects, therefore, going forward seem rather more uncertain than the recent past. Bundestag elections in Germany in September 2021 brought to an end Angela Merkel's extraordinary Chancellorship of Germany; LDP leadership elections in Japan on September 29th were followed by national elections and Fumio Kishida claimed the prime ministership for the long-reigning LDP. Presidential elections in Korea are to take place on March 9, 2022; and national elections are planned in France for April 10, 2022. Congressional elections occur in the United States this coming November, and national presidential elections will follow in November 2024. The UK will hold national elections by May 2024; and Italy will have elections no later than June 1, 2023.

The domestic political dynamics today are worrisome in many of these G20 countries. These dynamics include untested leaders and leaders facing election contests many of which include nationalist, or populist contenders for national office. In this moment of conjuncture of systemic crises, many countries are suffering from what could be called a 'crisis of governance'. This crisis has arisen, in part I believe, due to political fragmentation, polarization, and paralysis which has created a loss of public confidence, a loss of trust in institutions, leaders, and in markets.

But the difficulty in current national politics extends further. An "us versus them" narrative has engulfed public discourse. Politicians, political parties, governments, and politics more generally are increasingly viewed as not being able to deliver outcomes that meet public expectations. And the politics of discontent are feeding off the conflicting narratives over who is to blame. In the politics of many countries, this has promoted false choices between oversimplified opposing alternatives: markets versus the state, individualism versus solidarity, freedom versus order, and competition versus cooperation. In this fraught political context dominating politics in many countries, it is difficult for aspiring leaders to emerge and capture clear majorities in national elections. And political

fragmentation has meant that it is often the case that weak coalition governments are the product of this fraught political environment.

The resulting governing coalitions in many instances make it difficult to forge bold ambitious actions commensurate with the deep systemic challenges facing most nations. Germany may be an exception. Helmut Anheier of the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin (2021) writes pointedly of the toxic politics in advanced economies:

> The current German Bundestag election campaign offers further evidence of how Germany has long been spared from the dysfunctional political party system found in other Western democracies. While the United States buckles under an increasingly scorched-earth two-party war of attrition, the United Kingdom is routinely subjected to the Tory party's deeply deceitful political strategies and Labour's disingenuous fence-sitting. And France and Italy have both witnessed rapid swings that suggest disintegrating party systems.

The Social Order-Global Order Dynamics

Examining the fraught politics in many of these key G20 countries, we realize that for global governance to be strong, there needs to be a significant group of national leaders who can act as strong global leaders. The domestic political dynamics in many of these critical global governance countries do not seem to favor bold leadership because of the polarized politics in some cases, fragmented politics in others, and the general temptation by many contemporary politicians to resort to nationalism as an easy means to vault to prominence. Unfortunately, this political approach is not helpful in easing geopolitical tensions or in governing. There is some hope, however, that a focus on social inclusion by a number of leaders and candidates might inject a fresh public discourse into policy making in key global governance countries. A determination to focus on social inclusion can reveal mediating processes between extreme formulations and generate 'sweet spots' where these social outcomes are politically sustainable. These possibilities suggest the prospect for improvements in the social order first. Additionally, it is hoped that such fresh political discourse could positively impact the global order by creating a politics and a basis for greater multilateral cooperation instead of nationalism exacerbating geopolitics. The social order-global order dynamics and their interaction suggest a far more positive direction for both domestic and international affairs.

The positive interaction of social order-global order politics can be seen in current politics. One example is the current politics in Germany. With an election victory, the SPD took the lead in forming a coalition government led by Olaf Scholz, the then current German finance minister. Earlier, Scholz was labor minister and he brought balance to German politics with his gaining leadership. Anheier (2021) points to Scholz's acknowledgement of the impact of globalization on the politics and economics of Germany and its consequent social impacts on the German people. Anheier writes:

> Scholz contends that Germany, with its globalized economy, cannot isolate itself. Instead, it must try to manage globalization by modernizing its social market economy, so that it can mitigate the negative impact of open markets on vulnerable cohorts while ensuring future competitiveness through

proactive innovation policies.

Anheier proposes seven principled actions for securing Germany's place in a globalized future including: a significant increase in the minimum wage; ensuring high quality universal childcare and free education; investing in vocational training; expanding social housing; modernizing and expanding public infrastructure; and creating a fair taxation system. These are critical features to address social cohesion in Germany and possibly in Europe.

In fact, it turns out that as of the recent Norwegian elections, for the first time in 25 years, all five Nordic governments now are led by social democratic parties – Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland. The Nordic model is often referred to as a way forward to greater social inclusion. The economic policies improve the prospects for effective governance. A recent study by Martela et al. (2021) on "the Nordic exceptionalism" concludes:

> The Nordic countries are characterized by a virtuous cycle in which various key institutional and cultural indicators of good society feed into each other including well-functioning democracy, generous and effective social welfare benefits, low levels of crime and corruption, and satisfied citizens who feel free and trust each other and governmental institutions. … There seems to be no secret sauce specific to Nordic happiness that is unavailable to others. There is rather a more general recipe for creating highly satisfied citizens: Ensure that state institutions are of high quality, non-corrupt, able to deliver what they promise, and generous in taking care of citizens in various adversities."

The new German government led by the SPD in coalition with the Green Party and the Free Democrats along with the extant social democratic governments in the five Nordic countries, at the very least, injects into the global public discourse examples of countries that are showing credible effective governance pathways and policies to greater social inclusion at just the moment when accelerating those efforts across the globe would seem to be one of the crucial transitions toward better futures that people are turning towards. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030 (2015) provide, as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres pointed out, an urgent "common agenda" for the 2020s. Given the need for developed countries to also adopt stronger social agendas, one wonders whether the SDGs would not better be called 'systemic transformation goals', to make clear these goals are not just for developing countries alone (as were the earlier IDGs (International Development Goals) and MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) before them). These goals are not for normal times but rather for turning point moments and inflection points. It is, in fact, a ready roadmap for all countries whether advanced, emerging or developing countries for effective governance.

To meet the conjuncture of systemic political crises and systemic transformation requires governments to be able to function effectively to deliver politically sustainable outcomes which reinforce the legitimacy of governments and markets in the public mind. To do that, a focus on effective governance is far more important than focusing on forms of governance and regime type. Effective governance, I surmise, will aid in developing the skills, strategies and support for programs that can provide systemic sustainability internally in countries and support multilateral cooperation externally among countries. The CWD Project, where I am co-chair, urged that G20 leaders at the G20 Summit in Rome support the

establishment of a G20 working group on "effective governance" as a means of advancing the "common agenda" for the 2020s. Though the proposal was not taken up, the CWD urged more broadly that the G20 leaders target inclusive economic policies rather than focus on whether democratic or authoritarian governments provided better governance.

Transitioning from the G7 to the G20 – 'Shifting Coalitions of Consensus'

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his remarks to the UN General Assembly (September 2021) called upon leaders "to avoid our world creeping towards two different sets of…rules, two divergent approaches… and ultimately two different military and geopolitical strategies". President Biden (2021a) made clear his commitment to democracy over autocracy in a clear message to China at the UN: "authoritarianism – the authoritarians of the world may seek to proclaim the end of the age of democracy, but they are wrong".

However, most countries do not want to choose between siding with China and its authoritarian model, or with the United States and its democratic model (Yeo 2021). "The current Moon Jae-in government [Korea], for example, has worked hard to avoid being pulled into the 'anti-China' coalition'". And, the apparent revitalization of the Quad, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, with the first in-person leaders' gathering of the US, India, Australia, and Japan on September 24, 2021, appeared to raise concerns and disquiet for many countries in Southeast Asia including Indonesia and Malaysia, key members of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN). As Jonathan Stromseth suggested in a Brookings post (2021):

> The 'Indo-Pacific' discourse is viewed skeptically as a thinly-veiled containment strategy against China, with potentially destabilizing implications for the region. Although many Southeast Asians are deeply worried about China's growing influence and aggressive actions in the South China Sea, they largely prefer to manage China's rise by engaging and "enmeshing" Beijing in ASEAN institutions and mechanisms, rather than relying on a counter-coalition of major powers.

Latin American states wants an economic-business relationship with China but are not interested in political arrangements. Some members of the EU, France notably, have urged a stance of "strategic autonomy", vis-a-vis the US-China relationship, not wanting to line up with the US but rather deal with China on its own. Merkel's Germany pressed for the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) which was agreed to at the end of 2020, though the EU failed to ratify the agreement after China imposed sanctions on, among others, Members of the European Parliament.

As Kerry Brown puts it in his article for this Special Issue:

> In essence, European views on China are more complex, often more nuanced, and sometimes deeply ambiguous. That mindset frustrates the US clearly, but it may well be the more appropriate approach to a power that does not present the same stark security threat that the USSR did decades ago, but which is clearly deeply problematic in terms of its lack of alignment

> of values with the West. Ironically, for once Europe's complexity might be an asset rather than an impediment.

The United States has every right to express its support for democratic values, processes, and practices. The Summit for Democracy that the Biden Administration held in December could turn out to be a positive moment if it succeeds in strengthening the capacities of democracies to deliver results. Democratic protection, that is strengthening democracy at home, are appropriate concerns for G7 leaders. It is evident that the G7 can be a caucus for democracy. The G20, however, provides the critical setting for global governance. As I suggested in the earlier Brookings article (2021): "The G-20 could become a vehicle for more ambitious concerted global actions and a platform for addressing and managing geopolitical tensions." As I suggested with my CWD colleague Alan Alexandroff in Foreign Affairs (2021), "The G-20 is informal and flexible enough to accommodate the ideological diversity that the authors believe is necessary to manage contemporary great-power competition. The right players are at the table. Plurilateral leadership within the larger G20 – including China as a vital member – would bring multiple interests, perspectives, and pressures to bear on the issues at hand." The G20 is where "effective multilateralism" is required.

In this context, the United States needs to lead with others in sober, serious, focused, results-oriented negotiation modalities which enable progress rather than scoring points for domestic political purposes back home. China needs to be treated as a peer, key player, and potential partner and rule-maker in these fora to encourage professionalism necessary for progress. Treating China as a serious competitor is different than treating China as an adversary. And engaging in efforts to use negotiations on state behaviors as opportunities to press for systemic internal change in the economic system or political processes of China is reverting to the mistakes of the past. Until recently, it was assumed by many in the West that the liberalization of China's economy would lead to liberalization of the political system, which turns out now to be a fallacious line of reasoning. Furthermore, it is lecturing to a 'learning civilization'. Whether in fact it was true that policymakers believed that such a result would occur, and there is room to question that (Johnston 2019), we should know better by now.

Moreover, given the dramatic structural transformations underway, collaboration between China and the US is a must. As Michael Spence (2021) points out, there are at least four transformations underway: the multi-dimensional digital revolution; the push for clean energy and environmental sustainability; major breakthroughs in biomedical science and biology; and the rise of Asia. While these structural transformations can bolster global welfare, they likely involve disruptive transitions that require "major adaptations to existing global institutions and frameworks." Collaboration is thus a must. As Spence urges:

> Under these circumstances, we don't really have the luxury of focusing exclusively on competition or picking fights for domestic political gain. The risks to global health and prosperity are too high. Escaping the dangerous path of competition without cooperation will require sustained leadership on both sides and from all sectors of society. There is no guarantee of success, but there is no alternative to trying.

And it seems that such an altered course of action is highly necessary.

The challenge for the US is to move itself from excessive reliance on individualist

values – liberty, property rights, freedom, and sovereignty – which were foundational for the market economy, a competitive society, democracy, and the nation-state, to include social values of respect, fairness, trust, and responsibility which can facilitate actions to achieve social cohesion, public access, economic security, and sustainability. An inclusive America by all, for all, which invests in people, communities, and the planet can shape a common future for America at home and abroad. And it can shape a rebalanced approach to geopolitical relations, especially approaches to China, which can be more nuanced, complex, and inclusive. Such an approach would enhance its effectiveness not only vis-a-vis China but with the rest of the world as well.

The CWD process was founded on the concept that pluralizing the toxic US-China bilateral relationship would create more complexity, maneuvering room and policy space by providing varieties of perspectives and potential outcomes. Plurilateral leadership would enlarge the negotiating and political processes, thereby easing geopolitical tensions. Rather than a US-China bilateral focus, a China-West framing would improve global governance relations and improve the prospects for collaborative actions. Additionally, the CWD concluded that in the G20 experience a handful of countries could provide essential 'shifting coalitions of consensus' to drive closure and global governance results, rather than a fully universal multilateral consensus driven process.

We see this plurilateral leadership dynamic that is embedded in the much larger G20 process to open opportunities for rotation in and out of the G20 leadership depending on the issues and the occasions. Plurilateral dynamics have already included China in G20 leadership roles in 2010 and 2016, if not also in other years, and reveals avenues for China's more formative integration into global governance. And we have seen already in the G20, and we presume hopefully for the future, that such shifting coalitions of consensus, this plurilateral dynamic can arise and carry forward without initially the requirement of either leading power – that is without the US or China. CWD participants have proposed encouraging "plurilateral" leadership within the G20 by nurturing the role of powers beyond just China and the US within the G20. Plurilateral leadership manifests itself in G20 summit history where a few significant players beyond just the US and China play key roles in developing ambition and outcomes in the more successful G20 years. CWD has identified this dynamic as 'effective multilateralism'. This does require an acceptance of G20 leaders that such policy coalitions can be formed without requiring China or the US leading. As we said earlier, it takes, dynamic G20 leadership.

Furthermore, we have concluded that one of the most powerful ways to strengthen global governance is to strengthen the G20. Strengthening the G20 can be undertaken by member governments in ways that are feasible and relatively uncomplicated. Johannes Linn in his article for this Special Issue makes clear that there are always obstacles and impediments and some reforms proposed may not pass muster. But the 'asks' are not great, and the pain is relatively small. The resource in short supply is ambition and forceful G20 leaders. If G20 leaders want Leaders' Summit to work and have greater impact, that is the most crucial ingredient for strengthening global governance – strengthening the G20 itself. These dynamics suggest that the G20 provides a key multilateral forum in which to try to shift the nature of global order politics from confrontation to professional exchange. The UN is too big, the World Bank and IMF are too technical, the G7 is too limited in its member representation, and APEC is too limited in its mandate. The G20 of all global summits is evidently the most nimble, flexible, porous, open-ended, informal, and multiple in its form

and processes. And it is leader-led. What matters is what attitudes countries bring to it, and how urgent and inclusive their agendas are.

The issue is whether there is sufficient ambition, convergence, and leadership to put the world on sustainable trajectories for the rest of the decade of the 2020s. Values are not the issue. Scale, scope, depth, endurance of the commitments made at the G20 summits are the criteria by which G20 actions will be judged. The challenge is great. Leadership in the G20 has passed from Europe to Asia. The next host for 2022 is Indonesia and in turn in 2023 hosting of the G20 passes to India. This is a new era of leadership.

The Biden focus on the G7, the Quad, and the Summit for Democracy in 2021 has to be replaced by the G20 in 2022. Ten non-western countries are there, with different perspectives, cultures, and vantage points. What resonated at the G7 at Cornwall or EU gatherings will not fly at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Indonesia, or in India. The fact that there are a variety of views and viewpoints with the West is actually an asset, if only the United States officials would recognize it. A growing strategic competition and rivalry with China diverts US leadership from the global governance challenges that must be tackled. Use difference to enhance, enlarge and strengthen outcomes. There is plenty of literature on business and organizational behavior which makes clear that diversity of viewpoints, dissent, out-of-the-box thinking, curiosity, and innovation are drivers of better outcomes for business. The G20 is a large and varied space. Going into the G20 setting requires imagination, thoughtfulness, listening, and sensitivity to difference rather than single-mindedness.

In sum, these themes work together. Effective multilateralism in the G20 can be a significant means for generating effective governance in key countries by drawing on diverse country experiences and extracting practical policy ideas from others. In turn, collective global governance action and strengthening the G20 benefit from promoting effective governance domestically by reducing social pressures for populist nationalism. Effective multilateralism leads to effective governance; and so effective governance leads to effective multilateralism.

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Author biography

Colin Bradford is a non-resident Senior Fellow of the Global Economy and Development Program, Brookings Institution. He is a specialist in global governance and global summitry including research and writing on the G7 and the G20. He edited Global Leadership in Transition (2010); and Global Governance Reform (2007). As a co-chair of Vision20 (V20) since 2016, he has convened annual events with Brookings to encourage longer term strategic thinking for future global governance. He also co-founded the China-West Dialogue (CWD) that has brought together thought leaders from around the globe for the last several years to focus on geopolitical and global governance issues.

Can the G20 reform itself? Should it and can it?

Johannes F. Linn[16]

This article briefly surveys the achievements and limitations of the G20 since its inception as a Leaders' Summit in 2008 and notes that it has not lived up to the expectations of its supporters. It then assesses a recent proposal to reform and strengthen the G20 by Co-Chair of the China-West Dialogue (CWD) Colin Bradford and considers the rationale and impact of the implementation of specific recommendations designed to turn the G20 into a more effective global governance institution. While the recommendations generally point in the right direction, Linn concludes that the chances for significant progress are currently slim.

The track record of the G20 to date – in a nutshell

In October 2007 Colin Bradford[17] and I took stock of the urgent needs for global governance reform, including the need to move beyond the G8 and create the G20. We noted that it might take a global crisis to bring about serious change (Bradford and Linn 2007b). Shortly after the outbreak of the 2008 global financial crisis, then US President Bush invited global leaders to join him for what was to become the first of many G20 summits (Bradford and Linn 2008). In the immediate aftermath of the crisis, the G20 showed welcome coherence in its global response, raising our confidence that our long-standing arguments in favor of the creation of the G20 Leaders' Summit had been well-founded (Bradford and Linn 2009).

During the subsequent years, the G20 met some of the expectations of its promoters. It provided a forum for leaders of the systemically most important economies to meet at regular intervals face-to-face. The troika system of rotating and overlapping leadership became well-established and provided some degree of continuity for the G20 agenda. Also, the yearly agendas included items of global significance including such important matters as: the commitment not to increase trade protection, reform of financial regulation, support for concerted climate action, and some progress in steering increased resources towards the multilateral financial institutions with an improved balance in voice and vote for the rising economic powers of the Global South, especially China. Most recently, the G20 supported the agreement for a minimum corporate tax rate and for the largest ever allocation of IMF Special Drawing Rights (Louis 2021).

However, the G20 also disappointed those who had hoped it would address global

[16] The author gratefully acknowledges Alan Alexandroff's helpful comments on an earlier draft.

[17] Colin Bradford, non-resident Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution is the Co-Chair of the China-West Dialogue (CWD) Project. He had long been an observer and advocate for a G20 Leaders' Summit well before the initiation of the G20 Leaders' Summit along with Canada's former Prime Minister, the Right Honorable Paul Martin.

challenges in an effective and sustained manner by acting in effect as a "Global Steering Committee" (Linn and Bradford 2006):

- The G20 summits provided opportunities for G20 leaders to meet in person and listen to each other's views both in plenary sessions and in side meetings; but this did not prevent some leaders from abusing these opportunities to go and sulk, as Mr. Putin did at the G20 Summit hosted by Australia in 2014 in the wake of the Russian takeover of Crimea (Wintour and Doherty 2014), or literally to push fellow leaders around as Mr. Trump did during his years in office (ABC News 2017).

- With some exceptions, communiqués were long in words and covered many topics, but implementation of effective action in most areas has been slow. With each G20 presidency imposing its own pet priority on the group's agenda, many items were added over the years – often the result of pressure from interested stakeholders to see their priority reflected – with attention shifting from year to year, resulting in a diffuse compilation of manifold themes and action items that too often didn't reflect the true ownership of most of the leaders.

- Despite its stated support for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals at the 2016 Beijing summit, the G20 leaders did not focus effectively on the world's continuing poverty and growing income inequality problems (Bradford and Alexandroff 2020), two key goals among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, even as many engagement groups around the G20 pushed hard to have these issues take center stage at summits.

- Reform of the multilateral system took center stage at the 2010 G20 summit in Korea (G20 Seoul Summit 2010) yet stalled with little progress in strengthening the United Nations, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization, and the World Health Organization. What occurred instead threatened to reverse the trend towards multilateralism of previous decades (Linn 2017).

- Increasingly deep divisions in the domestic politics of some of the G20 countries (especially in the US and Europe), the UK's break-away from the European Union, rising authoritarianism in and aggression towards their neighbors by others (Russia, China, Turkey), and the resurgence of geopolitical tension between the US and China made effective dialogue and negotiation at the G20 summits increasingly more difficult. At the same time, the G20 summits were apparently unable to slow or limit these negative trends, let alone reverse them.

- And most significantly, as FT's Martin Wolf's (2021) sharp critique of the 2021 G20 summit in Venice points out, the G20 failed to effectively address the two greatest global threats to humanity – pandemics and climate change.

When COVID-19 triggered the most recent global economic crisis during 2020, one might have hoped for swift and forceful collective action by the G20 and an intensive effort to reinforce its ability to act in a concerted manner. In effect, however, the G20 reacted only weakly under the presidency of Saudi Arabia and was unable to take a lead in mounting a concerted global health response together with the WHO. Rather than strengthening the

WHO, actions by China and the US – respectively, by undercutting efforts to investigate the origin of the pandemic (China), and by withdrawing from this crucial multilateral organization (the US) – weakened the global COVID response, with other countries unable to do much about it. Nor was the G20 able to coordinate a global economic stimulus. Historic stimulus programs were introduced in some of the bigger economies, but were based on individual rather than concerted action, and the less developed economies were largely left to fend for themselves with limited capacity to create stimulus programs. And despite – or perhaps because of – its weak response, no major initiative has been under discussion, let alone executed, to bring reform to the G20 in a way that would strengthen the G20's ability to deal with major global crises or to make it more effective in addressing chronic global challenges. In short, the last crisis left the G20 appearing divided, weak, and irrelevant, even as the G7 reappeared as a forum for concerted action among the Western democracies, rejuvenated by the active engagement by President Biden and key officials of his administration.

The proposal for G20 reform

In reaction to these cumulative developments, a proposal by Colin Bradford (2021a) to strengthen the G20 was put forward to a gathering of the China-West Dialogue (CWD) (Global Development Policy Center 2020), a group of international experts, thought leaders and former officials aiming to find constructive ways to bridge the growing US-China tensions and the undermining of multilateral action. In the statement on how to reform the G20, Bradford postulated that "[i]n the contemporary global order, the G20 is the only global forum currently available that is inclusive of global systemic diversity. It is the only forum capable of being a political platform for China-US relations to be addressed and adjudicated in the context of the interests and perspectives of other significant powers which have stakes in the outcomes and can facilitate the work by having influence on the process." Recognizing the need to strengthen the G20, the proposal examined the following eight steps, which were further developed by Colin Bradford (2021b) in a Brookings post:

- deliberately stimulating 'plurilateral leadership' on specific issues to increase ambition;
- including China in G20 plurilateral leadership as a strategic move to ease geopolitical tensions;
- encouraging flexibility and fluidity through 'shifting coalitions of consensus' driving different issues and replacing the 'dynamic' of pre-arranged alliances and fixed blocs;
- selectively including international security issues and officials in G20 processes to directly address sensitive issues;
- empowering G20 ministers to lead on advancing G20 actions in their portfolios throughout the year, informing leaders but not waiting for them;
- strengthening and creating international institutions to have capacities

commensurate with global systemic challenges;

- charging senior political advisers and Sherpas of G20 countries to connect G20 agendas and leaders to public concerns and prioritize G20 communications for ordinary citizens; and
- assuring consistency and follow-through from year-to-year by creating a G20 secretariat to ensure that G20 commitments are fulfilled, and plans implemented.

A skeptic's assessment of the CWD proposals

I can readily agree with Bradford that there is currently no other global leadership platform aside from the G20 that would inspire a realistic hope of effectively leading concerted multilateral action on growing global challenges. But after 13 years of experience with the G20, it is important that we assess the chances for reform with a sense of realism. So, what are the chances that the G20 will take action in the areas identified by Bradford and that, if commitments were to be made to their effect, they would actually be implemented with meaningful results? Unfortunately, I believe skepticism is justified. Let us take a look at the eight action areas in terms of whether they are clear in content, likely to be enacted, and/or likely to bring forth significant changes for the better.

Starting with the first three interrelated proposed actions, the idea of "plurilateralism", apparently, is to steer the G20 away from falling into the trap of fragmenting into fixed geopolitical rival blocks. Instead, the proposal is to foster the development of issue-specific interest coalitions in the G20, with varying membership across different issues, and explicitly including China in this process of ad hoc coalition formation. This is a clear proposition and, if pursued, holds the promise of less confrontational, more flexible, and constructive engagement by the major players. To some extent the G20 has already functioned along these lines, but it is not clear how and by whom this process would be further reinforced. The biggest obstacle is likely that the two principal powers around the G20 table – China and the US – appear to have taken up increasingly confrontational positions, driven by their domestic politics, by the inevitable competition between an established and a newly rising power, and by their fundamentally different social and political cultures and systems. One might hope that the G20 members – in particular, the European Union members, the UK, Canada, Korea, India and Japan – could act in ways that loosen up the hardening fronts. However, at this point it appears that the other G20 members either side with one or the other great power (Russia with China; Canada, the Europeans and Japan generally with the US), while the remaining emerging economy member nations do not see it in their interest to jump into the fray, lest they offend one or the other of the two top powers. So, the idea of "plurilateralism" for the G20 is a worthwhile aim, but it is doubtful there will be much progress towards it in the foreseeable future.

The next proposal is to add selected security issues to the agenda of the G20. The idea behind this proposal presumably is to find ways to reduce tensions and find common ground over issues that, if unattended, could reinforce geopolitical tensions. Much will depend on what issues are to be considered. Some might be readily tabled for exploration, if they do not involve critical national interests of particular G20 members (e.g., the current civil war in Ethiopia or even perhaps the Israel-Palestine conflict). Other security issues,

however, for example China's expansionary moves in the South China Sea or the current expansion of its nuclear force, Russia's engagement in Ukraine and Syria, or any potential US strikes against possible terrorist cells abroad, would likely not be accepted as agenda items for discussion by some of the G20 members. Nonetheless, even if some progress could be made with the more limited security issues by elevating them to the G20 agenda, that would already be worthwhile. And if progress is made in a few of these areas, this might raise confidence and trust among the members, enabling them also to take up some of the more difficult security topics.

The next proposal – to empower ministers to lead G20 dialogues in their areas of responsibility – builds on the positive experience with the G20 of finance ministers, which preceded the creation of the G20 summit. Currently selected G20 ministers already meet with their counterparts to exchange views in preparation for the G20 summits.

Broadening their remit to delve into details and make decisions on issues that can be resolved without elevating them to the leader level until the policy has been hammered out makes sense and appears doable. It is in accordance with what is already in practice in many other international forums, where ministers meet to agree on actions to be taken (such as the IMF's Interim Committee). However, it will be important that these G20 ministerial agreements reinforce, rather than undermine, other more inclusive processes already in existence, such as the UNFCCC negotiations on climate action, or bypass and disempower the governance structures of multilateral organizations, such as the WHO, other UN agencies and the multilateral development banks.

The next proposal by Bradford, regarding strengthening multilateral agencies, is welcome as a statement of general support for multilateral approaches to global problems but remains very high-level. It does not specify which agencies are to be strengthened and in what way the strengthening is to occur. Of course, a detailed list of reforms could be drawn up, as former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin (2015) did in 2015. If the G20 were to express unequivocal support, say, for a well-defined reform of the World Trade Organization, for major capital increases for the MDBs, or for the competitive selection of heads of international agencies, that would be welcome. But it is not clear why the G20 would reach agreement on any of these specific ideas or, if it did, push for action, if the governance structures of organizations – in which G20 members also play a major role – currently do not allow these decisions to be taken. The hope that, if these issues are raised to the leaders' level, they are more readily resolved than in the boards of directors of the organizations, is not borne out by the experience with the G20 so far.

The proposal to align G20 summit agendas more closely with "public concerns" and reaching out more effectively to the general public is laudable in principle. However, defining what are the public concerns is already difficult in a national political context – which these days is characterized by democracies riven by internal divisions on the one hand, and increasingly repressive authoritarian regimes on the other. In the multinational context of the G20, how is one to define "public concerns" in a meaningful way? Is it possible to identify common public concerns for all Chinese people, Indians, Indonesians, Japanese, Russians, Europeans, North Americans, Mexicans, Brazilians, and Argentinians? This could be an interesting research question for experts studying public opinion, but is it something that the G20 could embrace? The idea of "communication with ordinary citizens" is therefore also fraught with difficulties. G20 communications will, by necessity, be filtered through the communications strategies of individual governments and serve their national

political purposes. Past efforts to reach out to G20 stakeholder groups and organize inputs, such as think tanks (T20), youth (Y20), and others, have been well intended and perhaps useful in limited ways, but it is not clear whether a new G20 outreach and communications strategy can achieve more than that and more importantly significantly reshape the impact, or the image, of the G20.

The last of the proposals is to set up a permanent secretariat for the G20. This is an idea that has long been debated (Bradford and Linn 2007a), but that so far has not been taken up by the G20. The pros and cons are well understood, with the advantages of relatively informal exchanges, members' ownership of the process, and avoidance of a new international bureaucracy with its own agenda so far seem to be outweighing the potential benefits that might accrue from "assuring consistency and follow through" as far as the G20 members are concerned. Assuming one agrees with the judgment that the benefits of a secretariat outweigh those of the current informal structure, one must ask oneself what will convince G20 members to follow that advice. So far, no clear answer has emerged to that question.

Is there a way forward for G20 reform?

Where does this leave me as a skeptic? One may well sympathize with the Bradford objectives that underly his recommendations for reshaping the G20 to become more impactful in addressing critical global challenges, and one may agree that the eight areas of action are broadly the right streetlamps under which to look for the lost keys to G20 effectiveness. However, this can only be the very beginning of a dialogue with those who make decisions about the future of the G20 – in the first instance with the Sherpas of the 20 member governments, and ultimately with the 20 country leaders. These leaders will need to focus on the question of whether reform of the G20 is needed, and whether and which of the eight areas proposed by CWD are to be pursued.

Judging by past performance, including and especially during the most recent global crisis, there appears to exist little interest in G20 capitals to tinker seriously with the way the G20 operates. One will therefore have to recognize that incremental change is probably the best to hope for and combine the generic recommendations with a few specific action items, perhaps one each in each of the eight areas, that offer concrete ideas for the Sherpas and ultimately Leaders to consider. The less theoretical or esoteric sounding and the more concrete the actions identified, the easier it will likely be to engage with the G20 members in exploring options for reform.

Critically, one will have to explore how each of the generic and specific recommendations will be interpreted in the capitals of the G20 member countries and how to best argue the case for why it is in the national interest of a particular member to pursue the proposed actions. Bradford's proposals are acknowledged and broadly supported by influential experts of the China-West Dialogue who hail from some of the principal G20 countries. They are well-placed to explore the different national perspectives on G20 reform and – to the extent possible – engage in a dialogue with the Sherpas and their staffs to determine what is the subset of potential actions that might offer the chance for agreement on incremental change. Even as one might feel that more fundamental G20 reform is needed, it will be appropriate to scale expectations to more modest targets, lest one be disappointed by the lack of quick and far-reaching change once again.

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Author biography

Johannes F. Linn is a nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. A former Vice President at the World Bank, Linn has worked in recent years on issues of global governance reform and strengthening multilateral institutions.

The EU, US and China: Hybrid Multilateralism and the Limits of Prioritizing Values

Kerry Brown

Europe feels that it has a different relationship with China, a different history, and different drivers. But in the last few years, at least since 2016, political dynamics in the US and China have made the role of Europeans more uncomfortable and contested, with pressures applied from both sides of their allegiance. This article looks at the kind of structural drivers of US, China, and European relations, and where there is commonality and difference. In particular, the article looks at generic issues like environmentalism and economic sustainability for the Europeans and the EU, and how these provide a common narrative in working with and between China and the US.

The Europeans can be extended a little sympathy in their geopolitical travails in 2021. From 2008 to 2011, the greatest threat they faced was from potential economic implosion, as the Euro Crisis unraveled, spreading contagiously through Italy into Greece, creating high levels of anxiety that the whole European Union (EU) project and its (at that time) 28 member states would break up.

A decade on, and the main impact of this era for the Union itself was the decision by the United Kingdom to exit after a referendum in 2016. Most commentators agree that while there were complex reasons for this decision, one of the most important was the sense that the UK's economy had been unfairly exposed to risks arising in Europe over this time that it could not control but ended up paying a price for in terms of austerity measures. That event, despite gloomy predictions at the time that it would lead to others following Britain to the exit, in fact led to only deeper commitment. Even a former Euro-skeptic, extreme right wing politician Marie LePen of France, is likely to stand on a more pro-EU platform in the French presidential elections due next year in 2022. In many ways, the huge complications the UK went through as it finally formally left the EU in January 2020 have put everyone else off doing the same thing.

After the COVID-19 pandemic impact in early 2020, the main challenge for the Europeans (both those who are part of the EU, and those who are in the continent) have reverted to economic ones, and, in this context, trying to navigate a way between the US and China as their relationship becomes far more fraught. After the 'shock therapy' of the Trump presidency, when it seemed that the US was about to upend its multilateral commitments, and expect the Europeans, either through NATO, or the EU, or simply as a continent, to play a bigger role in global affairs, the Biden presidency has at least returned things to a more even-keeled state. Even so, Europeans remain nervous, and should be.

The chancellorship of Angela Merkel in Germany, perhaps Europe's most powerful position, is coming to an end in 2021. She has typified the pragmatic side of Europe's foreign

policy, trying to balance economic self-interest with an acknowledgement that in terms of technology, security and political alignment, China is increasingly problematic. Her replacements, whoever they might be, are unlikely to be able to exercise the sort of cautiousness that she did. This article will look firstly at the European position on China; then it will look at the ways in which there is alignment and differences with the US and their position on the same issue; finally, it will look at the ways in which multilateralism between these two, both specifically about China, and then on broader issues, is indicating a new, harsh reality. It is apparent that the costs of prioritizing values in relation to China are increasingly having to be set against the brute fact that in order to face issues effectively that matter to everyone from climate change to sustainability, the only option is co-operation. Here, the EU and Europe may be better able to compromise than the US.

The European Attitude to China

One of the first things to acknowledge is that even after COVID-19, the issue with European attitudes towards China in mid-2021 is that there is no easy consensus. Across the different states, whether they are members of the EU or not, on the questions of what people might think about China under its current political system, and the way it relates to the rest of the world, things are clear enough. Surveys have shown that public attitudes towards China in Europe, partly as a result of the pandemic, but also from other causes such as issues around human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and the tightening grip of Beijing in Hong Kong, have become largely negative. The fundamental issue is however just what sort of significance and permanence to give to these public attitudes. Should they be regarded as permanent shifts, and therefore decisive in crafting policy, meaning that in a raft of areas from economic co-operation to partnership on facing climate change or other public health challenges, work with China should be either kept of a minimum, or simply stopped. Or should they simply be treated as something that might be shallowly rooted and more subject to the vagaries of temporary fluctuations of public mood, and therefore not of huge importance to policy decisions where to not work with China, simply through self-interest, would be harmful and self-defeating. Settling on either of these postures, and making long term decisions based on them, would impact directly both on relations with China, and with the US, and on the role that Europe could play between them. They may end up creating a whole new reality, but from something that in the beginning was perhaps not as deeply rooted as was assumed at the time.

As a good case study of how this assumption about the hardening of public mood by political figures works out in practice, one can look at the story of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) negotiated between the EU and China over seven years and finalized on the last day of 2020. This sought to open several important sectors to European companies that they had been keen to see become available to them for a number of years. For healthcare providers, finance companies, and high-tech companies, the CAI opens up China, and allows clarity about what China can do in the EU, as never before. On the whole, it was perhaps the first major deal between the two which worked well for Europe and avoided the asymmetry in China's favor of deals from the past, simply because it played to Europe's strengths in the services sectors and allowed a new kind of access to the emerging middle class in the People's Republic of China (PRC). This could be seen as a clear victory

for the pragmatists, of whom Germany's Merkel is the most prominent. However, the European Parliament, who needs to ratify the deal to allow it to be implemented, refused to do so on the 20th of May. This was due to the imposition of sanctions on European parties and members of the parliament by China a few weeks before in response to European and American sanctioning of Chinese officials directly linked to Xinjiang, and the ongoing human rights situation in that region – along with a raft of other concerns. Of the 705 members of the European parliament, 599 voted not to ratify the CAI. This strong rejection showed the strength of this feeling.

Europe in mid-2021 is certainly in a period of rising antagonism towards China. The question is more about how long term this will prove. For evidence of the immediate deterioration, one did not have to look very far. Italy, once enthusiastic about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy idea, considered revoking the Memorandum of Understanding it had signed in 2019 supporting the BRI, despite criticism from their fellow Europeans and the Americans. The Czech Republic, despite having a president seen as largely pro-Beijing, saw an accelerating slump in bilateral relations after the city of Prague engaged in relations with Taipei, much to the ire of Beijing. French president Macron delivered harsh words towards China in an interview with the Financial Times in April 2020 when he said it was time to rethink Europe's relations with its main trading partner. Tellingly though, these were not, however, followed up by major actions, and he subsequently kept a lower profile on this issue.

In terms of the longer-term structural basis of Sino-European relations, their 'Strategic Outlook' on China issued by the European Commission in March 2019, which predated COVID-19, the Union had already adopted a position which at least on the surface accepted the complexity of what it was facing in its relations with China. Nothing that happened over 2020 into 2021 fundamentally changed this posture. China in that document was seen as a 'systemic rival' in some areas, but also a partner in others, and a competitor in some. The durability of this division was proved by the way that it prefigured similar language used by the then newly appointed US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in March 2021 when he also acknowledged that relations with China divided into competitive, collaborative, and adversarial. To some extent, this was also articulated, implicitly rather than explicitly, in the British government "Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy" issued in April (Government of UK Cabinet Office 2021). These, issuing from separate foreign policy actors, at least showed some degree of alignment which might be taken as having longer term meaning. The underlying reality all acknowledged was that working with China was unavoidable, something even the Trump Presidency implicitly accepted with its desire to do new style trade deals with the country rather than simply jettisoning co-operation altogether. The question going forward therefore is not whether there should be a relationship with China, nor that that relationship was not hugely important, but more about where exactly in this trilateral division specific issues are actually placed, and whether the Europeans and the Americans agree with each other on how they have divided things.

The Hundred Flowers, European Style

Europe's position is complicated because of course, policy towards China resides in many different places, not just in the Union itself, but also across member states. Being an entity that is inherently pluralistic and embraces pluralistic values has always been part of the EU's identity. The downside is that this diversity internally has been a perennial problem for the last two decades. As China has become an increasingly important actor, different views about how to understand this in Europe, and what, if anything, to do about it have often meant that inactivity has been the final result, arising from the inability to agree on what to do. Around the time of China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, the default for the Union and for its members, and the rest of Europe, was that China was a major economic opportunity that needed the right framework to be optimized. The Union in many ways offered the perfect screen for managing to deal with the thornier issues around China's human rights differences, because while member states could forge ahead trying to get investment and improve trade with Beijing, things WTO entry helped facilitate, the less positive, more complex issues could always be fielded through the EU. It was at this level that, for instance, most contentious matters around ethnic minority rights, or political rights, were fed. As a coalition of nations, this meant when things did get turbulent, Beijing could only aim its ire at Brussels rather than take action against individual states.

Moving down to more granular detail, the main European states have a spectrum of policy attitudes towards China, arising from their specific histories with China, and their own assessments of their needs and strengths, which impacts how they regard the current global role of the country, and what sort of relationship to have with it. For Germany, under Merkel, the attitude has been pragmatic, framed by the success that the country has enjoyed as an exporter and manufacturer. For many years Germany uniquely had a trade surplus with the PRC. It's companies like Siemens and Volkswagen found huge and lucrative markets there. In protecting this, Germany has often been called an appeaser, even though over 2019 more strident voices started to appear, looking for harder push back. The Green Party, enjoying rising political influence, has adopted a tougher attitude since 2020, though it is a legitimate question about how much that attitude can be maintained if and when they come to national power once Merkel retires and new elections in late 2021 and early 2022.

For France, investment and trade are far less developed. Historically, their relations with China have tended to be far less politicized and revolve more around issues such as culture and communication. France's soft power is well recognized amongst Chinese middle class, who constituted until 2019 its largest suppliers of tourists. It is hard to spell out a well-defined French policy towards China – it has tended to veer from antagonism to pragmatism in recent years, framed more by Paris's issues with the US, Germany, or the rest of the EU, rather than on overtly bilateral matters. Somewhat tellingly, the official China France page of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at least as of the 20^{th} July 2021, had not been updated since mid-2019, despite all the changes over that period, and spelled out two key strategic aims – to rebalance trade, and to engage in science and technology. (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs 2019)

Beyond these larger countries, approaches to China split, sometimes starkly. Some like Greece have enjoyed good levels of investment and rising trade with the PRC, even allowing the Chinese state company, China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), to own Piraeus Port, and vetoing criticism of human rights issues coming from the EU during the

2017 UN Human Rights Council meeting. Others, like Poland have figured as part of the 16 (subsequently increased to 17 when Greece joined in 2019, before returning to its former number after Lithuania dropped out in 2021) plus one gathering of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which China instigated from 2012 (much to the irritation of Brussels because of the involvement of 11 EU members). For Eastern Europe, the memory of many of the countries there once having been under Communist rule meant they at least on the surface understood the political system of China better. But, despite this, their main priority has been to ensure higher levels of Chinese investment and economic support. Some, like Hungary, have in recent years even become enthusiastic and vocal supporters of more involvement and closer relations. Non-EU members like Serbia have also tried to engage more with economic opportunities from China.

Across all these different countries, and their different perspectives and attitudes, if there is one thing that unites them it is a sense that up to 2021 the opportunity from China has so far not met with expectations. Countries like Germany and Greece are those that have done best in terms of investment and trade. The members of the 16 plus one (apart from Greece), however, started off expecting the most and have not seen their original projections a decade ago met. On top of this, they have had to balance the political costs of risking alienating their chief security relationships – which mostly means the US. In that sense, there is therefore a European quandary, one that is shared across different places – and that is how to craft a more hybrid, nuanced approach to China when what was expected to be the most compelling element of relations with it, economic benefits, are either not yet at a level to justify the security and political risks these carry or look like they might not ever fulfil the high expectations once held. Were these economic links stronger, then perhaps there would be more European political figures willing to argue more strenuously for working with China and trying to shape public opinion. At the moment, however, that is not happening.

Solving the EU China US Riddle

For a group that constitutes over half of global GDP, one of the anomalies of the last two decades has been the way in which the EU, China and the US have never sat down in a room and spoken to each other. The closest they have come to this is the G20, which the EU belongs to as a partner. But that, of course, has many others gathered around the table. This is despite the fact that the EU and China between them have a High-Level Strategic Dialogue, established in 2005, which held its tenth meeting in June 2020. The US and China also set up their own similar dialogue in 2009 – the US-China Economic and Strategic Dialogue, a body which grew from two entities from the George W Bush era, the Strategic Economic Dialogue, and the Senior Dialogue. In 2017, this became the Comprehensive Economic Dialogue.

In the final months of the Trump Presidency in 2020, and for the first time, the EU and US decided to establish their own Bilateral Dialogue on China. This was, as the press release launching it in October that year declared, 'dedicated forum for EU and U.S. experts to discuss the full range of issues related to China.'[18]. The main significance of establishing such a body however was a tacit acknowledgement by the US (and to be fair, by the EU) that China was now a problem that was too big for either of them to deal with alone. Despite their

[18] The launch of the U.S.-EU Dialogue on China was October 26, 2020.

trade arguments over the Trump era, there was an admission that with China, perhaps their common problems outweighed their differences.

The Dialogue has outlasted the transition between administrations. Biden has proved as keen as his predecessor to show he is tough on China. He has also tried to do this through commitment to multilateral partnerships. On March 24, 2021, his Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, met with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. In their joint statement after the meeting, the two declared that the bilateral China Dialogue would continue. Their statement (Joint Statement 2021) went on that "they acknowledged a shared understanding that relations with China are multifaceted, comprising elements of cooperation, competition, and systemic rivalry", using the language informed by "competitor, collaborator, adversary" found in key European and American documents of recent years about China referred to above. They continued that the dialogue would embrace economic issues; resilience; human rights; security; multilateralism; and areas for constructive engagement with China, such as climate change.

In participating in this Dialogue, the EU has already set out its broad position, which was to create its own space, but ensure that it kept close to the US. Borrell, speaking a year earlier, stated that "there is an increasing confrontation between China and the US. It is something that will frame tomorrow's world. The EU is not neutral in that confrontation. We share the same political system with the US, and we don't want to embrace the political system of China. We don't have to choose [between the US and China]," he said adding that "some people would like to push us to choose, but we don't have to choose – it has to be like Frank Sinatra's song, 'My way'". We have our own interests, and we should be able to defend them.' As the following year was to show, however, the challenges on trying to maintain a European balance on China became increasingly tough. On Hong Kong and the imposition of the National Security Law in June; on the claims of genocide in Xinjiang; on China's stance towards Taiwan; on claims that the coronavirus originally arose in a laboratory in China rather than a wet food market; and on issues around claims of widespread Chinese state sponsored cyber-attacks, Borrell had to issue different statements over 2020 into 2021 condemning China's behavior. Typical of these was one issued in Borrell's name on the 19th of July 2021, denouncing cyber-attacks on Microsoft. In the statement he said (Council of the EU 2021):

> The EU and its member states reaffirm their strong commitment to responsible state behavior to ensure a global, open, free, stable, and secure cyberspace…The EU and its member states strongly denounce these malicious cyber activities, which are undertaken in contradiction with the norms of responsible state behavior as endorsed by all UN member states. We continue to urge the Chinese authorities to adhere to these norms and not allow its territory to be used for malicious cyber activities.

These kinds of events were similarly condemned by the US. This implied therefore that there was now, as never before, an alignment between the two on how to work with China. The US, once jealously guarding its freedom of autonomy and action with China, was now keen to find common cause with other like-minded powers to try to work out a way of facing down this immense new challenge. And despite Borrell's words about the EU needing to defend its own sovereignty of action, and its interests, it is highly telling that in this area too, the EU was increasingly using a similar language and similar approach about China as

the US. Such a fortuitous emerging and deepening alignment, with more consensus on themes, and how best to carry the dialogue forward, and much more appreciation of parity between the two, would have been impressive but for one thing – neither the EU nor the US separately nor together seemed to have worked out the magic solution of how to have relations with a partner where there was so much depth and collaboration in some areas (climate change, trade, tacking global public health being the most obvious) and yet such profound divergence in others. That they were working together was therefore perhaps more a sign of their drawing the line under their own efforts to find bilateral solutions and seeking some epiphany elsewhere.

Multilateralism Comes into Play

The US China EU/Europe bodies alluded to above were by no means the only action on the multilateral front, nor perhaps the most significant. We can broadly categorize other forms of multilateralism as those where China was involved and therefore directly able to influence the situation and outcomes, and those where it was absent but increasingly, and more profoundly, becoming the main focus of conversation. Of the former, if we are explicitly referring to bodies where Europe through the EU or member states have a strong specific voice, we can largely talk of the G20. Of the latter, these would be NATO and the G7. It is through these bodies that we can see clearly the emerging of the China dilemma, and how the US and EU/Europe have had to construct and then work in a bifurcated world despite their clear language about seeing common problems and issues with China.

To deal with the second group – those multilateral fora where China is absent – first, we must refer to recent history to give a bit of complicating context. From 2017 to 2021, meetings of the G7, and of the transatlantic security agreement – NATO, were, for non-Americans, nerve-racking affairs. US President Trump clearly regarded them dimly, generally opposing multilateral arrangements. For Trump his opposition highlighted his policy to pursue his own domestic agenda as the President who could show fellow Americans that foreign freeloading was becoming a thing of the past, or as an opportunity to berate fellow heads of government and state to contribute more to their own security, rather than relying on Washington. The US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, along with similar action on the EU brokered nuclear proliferation deal with Iran, all helped to create the sense, perhaps for the first time in the current century, that the US was no longer an entirely reliable partner. And although Biden's presidency has brought about a return to multilateralism, how long this lasts and how enduring it will prove to be are questions yet impossible to currently answer. In any case, despite this, as was argued above, when discussing the EU-US Bilateral Dialogue on China, the Trump Administration towards its end seemed to agree that even in the era of Making America Great Again, China was an issue that they were not able to deal with on their own.

Perhaps a clearer way to work out what will happen going forward is to look less at the very antagonistic and sometimes fractious language that now prevails from the EU and US towards China and focus instead on the areas where they have had to agree that China is a collaborative partner in ways which speak to their own self-interest. It is in the recent communiques of multilateral fora that one sees this come to the fore. The G7 held in Cornwall, UK in mid-June gives some sense of how this works. In the past, in the era of Hu

Jintao, Xi Jinping's predecessor as president and Party head in the 2000s, China was from time to time present as an observer at what was then the G8 (while Russia was still a partner, before Russia was suspended because of the annexation of the Crimea in 2010).

Under Xi, China has not been involved in the G7 work at all, even as an observer. In the last few years, it has grown progressively more suspicious and skeptical of the grouping. For the 2021 gathering, an official from the Chinese government said curtly that "The days when global decisions were dictated by a small group of countries are long gone. We always believe that countries, big or small, strong or weak, poor or rich, are equals, and that world affairs should be handled through consultation by all countries" (BBC News 2021).

The optics of the G7 in 2021, after the turbulence of the previous year with COVID-19, and the transition from Trump to Biden, do seem to fit a narrative from Beijing's viewpoint which has an air of containment about it. Even so, it is striking that the G7 Communique (2021), in its 25 pages, only mentions China directly twice. The first, deep into the document, occurs on page 19 (G7 Cornwall Communique 2021), after a discussion about commitment to supporting the current multilateral system. The communique continues:

> We will cooperate where it is in our mutual interest on shared global challenges, in particular addressing climate change and biodiversity loss in the context of COP26 and other multilateral discussions. At the same time and in so doing, we will promote our values, including by calling on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in relation to Xinjiang and those rights, freedoms, and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

There is then a subsequent, very brief, reference to the need to preserve stability on the Taiwan Strait, and in the South China Sea. China however is not referred to explicitly here – it is the Indo-Pacific that takes full billing. While issues like Ethiopia, Russia, Myanmar and the DPRK get paragraph long treatments, China is passed over largely in discreet silence.

The quotation above is worth dwelling on because of the way that this single explicit mention of China is made. The acknowledgement of the generic, massive, shared challenges of climate change and sustainability takes precedence. Multilateralism figures as one of the main means by which to address these. The G7 partners assert that their shared values lie at the heart of this. In that context, China is figured as a problem – a partner in combatting the first set of issues, but also one that, in its management of Xinjiang and Hong Kong, has posed increasingly hard questions since 2019, and shows that its practice of multilateralism while deeply useful and important, is still problematic and untrustworthy.

The question of the China quandary and the divided, ambiguous responses it elicits from outsiders referred to above haunts the way the country appears in the G7 2021 communique. There, China figures as the thorny, and largely unresolved, question of how to balance the seemingly categorical insistence on shared, presumably liberal, democratic values amongst the G7 and their allies on the one hand, and the pragmatic acknowledgement on the other that for issues like the environment, or public health, or any one of the other challenges the G7 make statements about, China's partnership is key. It is an unavoidable partner, dealing with unavoidable problems. Some commentators make the argument that in this situation, China's needs from combatting the degradation of its natural environment, and managing its carbon emissions, are greater than those of the US or Europe. The G7 feels that

in fact this situation means that China is, despite its current confidence and the power gained from its economy, in a more vulnerable position than it seems. As journalist Isaac Stone Fish (2021) writes:

> Beijing is in greater need of the United States' cooperation on climate than the reverse. Climate action is necessary for China and, thus, for the party's legitimacy – and the United States weakens its own fight against climate change if it compromises to strike a deal with China on an issue that is more in the party's interest to address.

The logical fallacy of this argument is that somehow there is a China climate change issue, and a US one, and they can be easily segregated. In fact, it would be much more accurate to say that there is a common climate change issue – called the provision of global public goods – getting progressively worse by the day, and that China, the US, and everyone else needs to solve this. This is not something that one party can use as leverage over the other. Failure to address it will simply bring down everyone. Twenty or thirty years ago, perhaps, when the problem was not so grave, it might have been possible to play politics with it this way between contesting parties. But these days, the overwhelming evidence shows that the searing temperatures seen in the last couple of years in North America mean there is not much merit in talking about the Communist Party getting a better deal than the US if America decides to co-operate in this area.

Prevaricating like this might expend a little of the precious time left to really deal with this issue. Everyone is in the same boat on this one – and the boat is taking on water.

The Existential Issues

The striking feature of the G7 communique therefore was how much of it even in a gathering like this where China was absent, was devoted to more generic issues like health, economic recovery and jobs, free and fair trade, climate and environment and gender equality. On each of these issues, China is not an opponent in terms of acknowledging their importance and accepting the challenges they pose. The main issue is more means to cooperation, rather than that cooperation needs to happen in the first place. Indeed, as with climate change above, it is hard to see how a country constituting a fifth of global GDP, and of the world's population, could be excluded from trying to find solutions in any of these areas. The whole COVID19 pandemic for all the generation of political anger and geopolitical spleen between different nations has underlined that some problems do not respect national boundaries. And even though the origination of the virus in Wuhan, central China, with the ongoing controversy over precisely how the first infections happened, created political bad blood between China and the outside world, it also powerfully showed that if these different parties didn't at some level have a way of cooperating, then the original problem would end up being close to insoluble.

That makes the way in which China is presented as a central, all-encompassing threat by many political and administrative parties in Europe and the US particularly purblind, and contestable. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is a good illustration of this: 'The greatest long-term threat to our nation's information and intellectual property, and to our economic vitality, is the counterintelligence and economic espionage threat from China,' its director, Christopher Wray, is quoted as saying on its 'China Threat' website

(Federal Bureau of Investigation 2021). This is a powerful and dramatic statement, and there are some ways where it may well be true. But compared to the sorts of issues that Oxford University based futurologist Toby Ord (2020) outlines in his recent work on existential crisis that may, in the near to medium term future, destroy the human race, and which therefore will have vast economic consequences, China simply does not register.

On Ord's account, the impact of climate on sea levels, and through extreme weather events, stands a good chance of dramatically disrupting human life in the next century. A nuclear war might well, if it broke out, be so extreme in its impact that it makes all but tiny, remote pockets of the earth uninhabitable. A pandemic, as events over 2020 into 2021 dramatically showed, would also potentially cause widespread fatalities. Interestingly, of all the challenges that Ord writes about, artificial intelligence is the gravest. He envisages a chillingly plausible scenario where, quite soon, humans create entities that are intellectually superior to them, and, driven by their own desire for dominance and survival, start to turn on their creators. The Frankenstein dystopian vision of two centuries before from the adolescent pen of Mary Shelley remains as potent and terrifying in terms of its possibility today. And this, even in the wilder imaginations of the most implacable of China's opponents, is not a country specific threat – it is a threat to humanity itself.

This issue of it mattering deeply where one stands is a crucial one to bear in mind in this context. If the world is to be seen purely through the prism of competition between nation states, and their differing value sets and visions, then China does loom large. Despite over four decades of economic partnership with North America, Europe and others, China has ended up creating a capitalist looking economy, but one run by, the Communist Party. This is a staggering place for history to end up – with the world's largest economic actor, at some point in the next decade, being one led by a ruling party and the government under it that, on their outside at least, bears the label of a Marxist-Leninist political movement.[19]. This is disruptive, in many ways inconvenient, and problematic for sure. Is it, however, an issue on the same level as any of those mentioned in the paragraph above? If one shifts the frame of the China challenge to the context of these problems of existential significance, then things look very different. That is for the very simple reason that all of Ord's problems are not the West's, or China's, but humanity's. And all their solutions, too, are ones that the global community will need to play a role in, no matter where they reside.

In this context, in fact, shifting the China and the West relationship more into the existential problems space sparks off radically new ways of seeing things, and marks a wholly new urgency to multilateralism that is almost blind to countries and only focused on issues. The artificial intelligence problem Ord refers to is one good place to think about this. China's vast investments into this area, and its deployment of some of this technology in areas like Xinjiang where there have been multiple, credible reports of systemic human rights abuses over the last few years, in particular, are indisputably profoundly troubling. It is right

[19] Whether China, either currently or ever, has really practised Marxism-Leninism is a thorny question. A good recent treatment of this, in Tony Saich (2021). Saich shows just how torturous and complex the Communist movement in China's relations were from its foundation in 1921 onto its rise to power 28 years later. Chinese Marxists under Mao added the crucial qualifier that while they were working in accordance with a universal ideology, they were doing so in a way that suited China's unique conditions, meant that in many ways they were undercutting the pretensions of universality in their guiding, imported ideology. It remains a moot question to this day therefore just how Marxist, or Communist, China is. But in view of the collapse of the other major countries following the same ideology, the fact that China under its current system survives, and might in some respects even be said to prosper, speaks volumes.

that the outside world, as the G7 leaders did, continue to raise this issue and put what pressure they can on China. The challenge however is that simply declaring this a horrifying situation but not knowing how to do something about it risks ending up in the same old space of moralizing and berating China for the sake of it. An even sharper problem, and one laden by moral challenges, is just how one balances concerns about this issue with the need to continue to work positively on the generic issues outlined above? All that one can say here is that anyone who comes out with neat, easy answers is missing something hugely important.

This does not mean that Beijing can wage ahead unheeding and indifferent to criticisms made of it. It too is now a stakeholder in what everyone else is doing. To take one particular case at some point, if Ord is right, then even Beijing will need to think deeply about the dangers that he so lucidly describes in terms of AI getting out of hand and threatening its human creators. Already, researchers in Chinese laboratories have undertaken problematic gene editing experiments (something the Chinese authorities immediately condemned, showing they have some awareness of the dangers of unbridled experimentation). China has created some of the world's most powerful computers. It has committed seven per cent of GDP to research and development under the current national Five-Year Plan running from 2021. That comes to billions each year, to be spent on creating new innovations and pushing back the frontiers of knowledge. It is likely that the fateful day when humans see creations springing from their own ingenuity that are able to operate against them will occur in a Chinese laboratory rather than a western one. Artificial intelligence is a deadly serious problem for China as much as anyone else.

These grand existential questions, with all their gravity, and chilling massiveness, are at the same time also great geopolitical levelers. They put the other associated issue of lack of alignment in values, and economic imbalances between countries, into a new perspective. This is not to suggest that these issues are unimportant. But it is to make clear that this new context will mean that they need to be rethought – and that needs to happen with China involved.

Multilateralism Coming Back – getting the form right

This means that despite the harsh response by China to the few words levelled at it in the G7 communique in 2021, the very fact that Italy, America, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and Japan mentioned the country so briefly is testament to the fact that even these partners know their priorities mean that they have to speak, think and articulate positions on China that are nowhere near as starkly negative as much public language and discussion on China today. Politicians in Britain and the US can play for applause and plaudits before their respective domestic audience by adopting a hardline on China – but the reality is that a hardline on China also means jeopardizing job creating economic cooperation or technology alliances that might now be in the West's favor. Opportunity costs and risk management have become far more important. Ironically, the pandemic has made it clear that, like it or not, because of a borderless issue like this, a new era of multilateralism is at hand. The menu of other existential issues above reinforces that. These will need multilateral responses to be soluble. The question is what format this multilateralism takes.

It also has to be recognized here that in terms of framing the centrality of values, despite the EU presenting itself as the ultimate liberal norms-setter because of its history and

the underpinning importance of European Enlightenment values, it has necessarily had to be a more pragmatic actor because of its internal diversity and complexity. It has constantly needed to broker compromise and consensus amongst its complex membership, and amongst its key partners in Europe who are neighbors but not formally part of the Union – of whom now the UK is one. America as a more unified political actor means that its discourse on China is far more unified, and starkly Manichean. In this China is the ultimate home of tyranny, Communist repression and Atheism, a place that figures to many citizens and politicians in America as an almost existential threat. While there are some in Europe that might subscribe to this view, overall, the general impression, historically, and even in 2021, is not so starkly binary. In essence, European views on China are more complex, often more nuanced, and sometimes deeply ambiguous. That mindset frustrates the US clearly, but it may well be the more appropriate approach to a power that does not present the same stark security threat that the USSR did decades ago, but which is clearly deeply problematic in terms of its lack of alignment of values with the West. Ironically, for once Europe's complexity might be an asset rather than an impediment.

More positively, for combatting issues of existential importance like climate change, COP26, and the Paris agreement at least offer some multilateral structures that seems, mostly, to work and which can complement the work of the G20. With other issues, there is less clarity – but that does not mean that these too cannot also have a similar architecture to work on. China certainly is not averse to multilateralism. Its own Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the more amorphous Belt and Road (BRI) prove this. The G20 perhaps offers the main hope to set a more diverse global structure to do this up. After all, this is the key multilateral body after the UN and its agencies where China is definitely in the room and part of the conversation. This means that the communiques that issue from the G20 do not, therefore, contain even the sentence or two of direct criticism and voicing of concern about China that the G7 2021 communique did. For Japan's G20 Leaders' Summit, Osaka 2019, for instance, the headings of the communique finally issued were all addressing generic issues: global finance and technology, anti-corruption, inequality, women's empowerment, public health, sustainability, and climate change. In essence, the G20 stands increasingly as the place where the inevitable, more realistic face of multilateralism figures – an acknowledgement that despite all the differences, the priority is to address existential issues like that of climate change and sustainability. Values in many ways, although this is not something that any key European leader would dare to say, have been slowly relegated. The harsh truth is that in 2021, after the ravages of the pandemic, and the increasing evidence across the planet of larger and larger numbers of serious extreme weather events, the world is moving into an era of profound crisis and emergency.

Much will depend on the economic situation. As the US and Europe emerge from the shock of COVID-19, there is a lot of uncertainty. The G7 2021 vision of 'Building back better' is a noble one. It may well prove to be impractical too. The quandary for Europeans may well end up being trying to work out ways of economically engaging with China at a time when its economy will be doing well, and it may well be granting wider access to outside partners. Asserting the primacy of values and principles over everything else gets more difficult for politicians when jobs are being lost, and economies are ailing. The great test for Europe will therefore almost certainly come at the point when its own economic challenges mean China, rather than the US, offers stronger prospects.

To be able to navigate the demands of both Washington and Beijing going forward

will stretch the diplomatic skills of the Europeans as never before. Too often in the past they have tended to go with the flow, sometimes when the time seemed propitious getting closer to China, sometimes sharply drawing away when America expressed displeasure.

During a particularly difficult moment in the Trump presidency, German Chancellor Merkel stated that Europe would need to be more autonomous in its decision-making and security in the future. They were brave words, but ones that have much truth. To be able to work out a way to balance between China and the US will mean that Europe, despite its complexity, and the difficulty of the questions being posed for it by this issue, will have to hammer out a consensus about what it wants, and how it intends to achieve that. Ironically, it is possible that focusing on the existential issues first, and then moving backwards to spelling out what necessary role China plays in addressing these, might offer the most positive way forward.

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Author biography

Kerry Brown is Professor of Chinese Studies and Director of the Lau China Institute at King's College, London, and Associate Fellow on the Asia Pacific Program at Chatham House. He is the author of over 20 books on China, the most recent, "China Through European Eyes: 800 Years of Cultural and Intellectual Encounter" will be published by World Scientific, Singapore, in January 2022.

Building A More Inclusive, People-Centered Multilateralism: The Role of Survey Research

Richard Wike

Recent calls by scholars for more multi-stakeholder approaches to international cooperation are a welcome effort to make international politics more inclusive. Nevertheless, even these proposed approaches sometimes ignore or downplay one very important stakeholder: ordinary citizens. Public perception that multilateralism and global governance are dominated by elites, and therefore reflective of elite priorities, is one factor driving populism and political resentment around much of the globe. Unless this trend is reversed, international organizations will increasingly lose legitimacy, and people will increasingly lose faith that international cooperation can effectively address the problems they care about most.

To address this challenge, multilateral institutions need to make international cooperation more inclusive and people focused. As part of a more inclusive and consultative approach to decision making, these multilateral institutions should consider employing survey research. Scholars, researchers, and practitioners have demonstrated that studying public opinion can be an effective way to amplify and include public voices. Below I outline a proposal for multilateral institutions such as the UN and G20 to incorporate survey research into their annual cycles, providing ordinary citizens with a more robust voice in multilateral conversations about key international issues.[20]

The Democratic Deficit

The coronavirus pandemic, climate change, a global economic crisis, cybersecurity and digital privacy, and many other challenges over the past few years have highlighted the need for stronger and more enduring multilateral solutions to the many global problems. Survey research generally shows that publics around the world broadly support the principles of international cooperation and believe in the values and objectives that guide multilateral institutions. However, these same surveys find that many ordinary citizens feel distant from multilateral organizations and uncertain about the ability of these organizations to deal effectively with global challenges. At a time when international cooperation is badly needed, publics often lack confidence that multilateral institutions can deliver such collaboration. If

[20] A previous version of this article was included in the work of T20 Italy's Task Force on Multilateralism and Global Governance.

leaders and organizations are going to successfully mobilize public opinion to back multilateral approaches, they will need to show that they are listening to citizen voices and that multilateral efforts can have a real impact on everyday lives.

Public opinion surveys by organizations such as the Pew Research Center, Edelman, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs highlight the degree to which publics around the world broadly support the ideals of international cooperation (Wike and Poushter 2021). For example, across 34 nations surveyed by Pew Research in 2019, a median of 65 percent said nations should act as part of a global community to solve problems, with majorities or pluralities expressing this view in nearly every country surveyed across sub-Saharan Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as the United States and Canada. A 2020 Pew Research survey among 14 of the top 20 donor countries to the United Nations found that a median of 58 percent across the nations polled said they believe nations should take other countries' interests into account when making foreign policy, even if that means making compromises, rather than acting purely in their own national interest (Bell et al. 2020).

Most of those surveyed in 2020 – in the early months of the COVID-19 outbreak – also believed more international cooperation could have mitigated the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. A median of 59 percent across the 14 nations believed cooperation with other countries would have reduced the number of infections in their own country, while only 36 percent said that no amount of cooperation would have reduced infections.

Survey research has also generally found that international publics have positive views about multilateral institutions. A 2021 Pew Research study found largely positive attitudes toward the United Nations in advanced economies. Across the 17 publics surveyed, a median of 67 percent expressed a favorable opinion of the UN. At least half of those polled in 15 of the 17 publics rated the organization favorably, and in Sweden, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, and South Korea and Canada, seven-in-ten or more gave the UN a positive review (Fagan and Moncus 2021).

However, while people see multilateral organizations in a positive light, they often question whether those same organizations really listen to their needs or are effective in their actions. In the 2020 Pew survey, majorities in every country praised the UN's promotion of human rights and peace. But far fewer, and in some cases only minorities, said the UN cares about the needs of ordinary people or deals effectively with international problems.

Climate change is a good example of an issue where there are strong doubts about the effectiveness of international cooperation. A 2021 Pew Research Center survey, conducted a few months before the COP26 conference in Glasgow, found that a median of only 46 percent across the 17 publics polled said they are confident that actions taken by the international community will significantly reduce the effects of climate change (Bell et al. 2021). A median of 52 percent said they were not confident these actions will reduce the effects of climate change.

Many also see multilateral organizations as part of an international system that does not serve their interests. For instance, a five-nation 2018 Bertelsmann survey highlighted the link between views about globalization and attitudes toward multilateral institutions (Tillman 2018). Bertelsmann found that respondents in Argentina, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States who believe they have not benefited from globalization were less likely to be supportive of international cooperation and organizations.

And of course, it is not just average citizens who voice these complaints – scholars,

writers, activists, and policymakers on both the right and left commonly criticize multilateral organizations for being unaccountable, unresponsive, and dominated by global elites. Critics contend that multilateral processes typically lack the transparent deliberation and mechanisms for consent that characterize well-functioning political systems.

More broadly, concerns about the health of multilateralism fit into a broader pattern of concern about the state of politics around the world, as frustrations with aspects of globalization have helped fuel a populist tide that has exacerbated a global "democratic recession" (Diamond 2015), as well as a decline in the health of the international order (Ikenberry 2020). Some scholars believe the roots of the populist wave are primarily economic (Gold 2020), while others emphasize a "cultural backlash" against demographic changes and increasing social liberalism (Norris and Inglehart 2019). While both economic and cultural factors surely play a role, researchers have also identified explicitly political factors, such as corruption and the perception that most politicians are disconnected from ordinary citizens (Wike and Fetterolf 2018; Wike and Fetterolf 2021; Foa 2021). Angry at out-of-touch political elites, many citizens have lost confidence in institutions and turned to populist leaders, parties, and movements.

These political dynamics often take place at the national level, but there are also clear implications for international politics and multilateral organizations. If anything, since these institutions lack direct accountability to voters and in many ways are more distant from ordinary citizens, multilateral institutions are more vulnerable to populist suspicions, and indeed such institutions are regularly the target of populist rhetoric. Unless these trends are reversed, international organizations will increasingly lose legitimacy, and people will increasingly lose faith that international cooperation can effectively address the problems they care about most.

To combat populists, nationalists, and isolationists, proponents of international cooperation must consider new ways to bolster the legitimacy of multilateral organizations. One path would be to build and institutionalize processes that are more inclusive and people centered. To help achieve this goal and address the trust gap between ordinary citizens and international policy elites, multilateral institutions should consider employing and institutionalizing survey research to better understand public opinion on key global issues. Scholars, researchers, and practitioners have demonstrated that survey research can be an effective approach for amplifying and including public voices. In his 1995 Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association, for instance, Sidney Verba (1996) argued that when survey respondents tell pollsters their views, they are engaging in a form of political participation, and that surveys can essentially provide an important tool for representation. When done well, surveys can help ensure that the beliefs and opinions of ordinary citizens are heard in debates about important political, economic, and social topics.

In the U.S. and other wealthy democracies, public polls have become an integral component of politics, and even in non-democratic countries, survey research is increasingly common. And, in addition to its role in domestic politics, polling has become a common feature of international affairs. Today, organizations like the Pew Research Center, the Gallup Organization, Ipsos, YouGov, and others routinely conduct cross-national surveys exploring public opinion on key issues around the world. These efforts are complemented by academic projects such as the World Values Survey and the various regional "barometer" polls, including the AmericasBarometer, Latinobarómetro, Afrobarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, and others. The global growth and spread of market research – as well as

political, economic, social, and health surveys, over the past two decades has enhanced the development of research infrastructure in nations around the world, including middle- and lower-income countries. In the vast majority of nations, there are now firms or institutions capable of conducting high-quality work. The Gallup World Poll, for instance, regularly conducts surveys in more than 160 countries.

Of course, authoritarian nations pose particular challenges for survey research. In such nations, there may be topics that respondents do not feel comfortable discussing or that research organizations do not feel comfortable exploring. And in some non-democratic nations, the legal and regulatory environment creates barriers that make survey research difficult. Despite these challenges, important survey projects are regularly conducted in non-democracies, including the three G20 nations categorized as "authoritarian" in the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2021 Democracy Index: China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia (Economist Intelligence Unit 2022).

Today, the increasing availability of global and regional surveys allows researchers, journalists, activists, business leaders, policymakers, and the informed public to have a portrait of what people around the world think about major global challenges and the issues that affect their lives. These studies help fill the information gap about international politics in the same way domestic polling helps fill an information gap about domestic politics providing data on the opinions of everyday citizens. This kind of information is especially valuable in world affairs, where debates are often shaped by diplomats, business leaders, scholarly experts, journalists, and other elites. All of these groups have a lot to add to discussions about key global issues, but international conferences and elite conversations – and the international organizations that regularly convene them – can be out of touch with the priorities and opinions of the general public. Survey research can help ensure that ordinary citizens are not left out of these important conversations.

At the same time, it is important to remember that surveys have limitations, and that even the best studies will never fully uncover the depth, nuance, and complexity of public opinion, or the motivations and myriad factors that influence an individual's thinking about politics and society. And survey research is not a substitute for institutional processes that, when they work effectively, help ensure that public sentiment is represented in official deliberations at various levels of governance. However, survey research can inform key audiences about the views, priorities, and values of everyday citizens across the globe.

Making the multilateralism organizations more inclusive

Even many strong supporters of international cooperation believe current multilateral organizations need greater inclusivity and transparency. Former Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Secretary General Angel Gurría has written about how multilateralism must become more inclusive, arguing that multilateral institutions should allow a wider range of stakeholders, including actors from civil society, to have influence over their decision making (Gurría 2019).

As Gurría notes, distrust of multilateralism is tied to distrust of globalization: "dissatisfaction with various aspects of globalization – tax avoidance and evasion, local blight associated with offshoring or foreign competition, surges in migration, increased market concentration and the emergence of globally dominant firms – has fed a suspicion

that the system is rigged to favor the interests of those with money and power and contributed to an erosion of trust in governments in many parts of the world and fueled protectionism, populism and unilateralism."

In addition to policymakers like Gurría, many prominent researchers and scholars have called on multilateral institutions to become more inclusive. For instance, Homi Kharas, Dennis Snower, and Sebastian Strauss have called for multilateral agreements to be more clearly focused on the public interest, and to more clearly promote opportunities for empowered citizens to live "meaningful and prosperous lives in sustainable, inclusive and thriving communities" (Kharas et al. 2020).

In their vision of "effective multilateralism," Alan Alexandroff, Colin Bradford, and Yves Tiberghien have described how multilateral efforts need to involve a wide variety of sub-national actors, such as foundations and private and public corporations, as well as cities, regions, and provinces (Alexandroff et al. 2020).

Several writers have argued that civil society organizations (CSOs) deserve a stronger voice within multilateral organizations and efforts, including the G20. Helmut Anheier and Stefan Toepler have argued for the establishment of an international civil society task force that would help repair what they characterize as a "strained relationship" between civil society and the G20. The task force would, among other things, work to identify appropriate regulatory models of state-civil society relations and effective models for the role of CSOs in multilateral and intergovernmental systems (Anheier and Toepler 2019).

Ronja Scheler and Hugo Dobson describe the C20, a group of civil society organizations and leaders, one of several "engagements groups" that supports the G20, as the "worst resourced" G20 engagement group, placing it at the bottom of the group hierarchy (the Business 20, which has the most resources, sits atop the hierarchy, according to Scheler and Dobson) (Scheler and Dobson 2020).

Scheler and Dobson advance a multi-stakeholder approach to international cooperation that would place non-state actors such as CSOs and private companies at the center of cooperative efforts. "Multi-stakeholder governance," according to the authors, "assumes that an effective governance of global commons like climate, digitalization, and global health requires cooperation among various groups of stakeholders constituting state and non-state actors."

As Scheler and Dobson note, their multi-stakeholder approach has some similarities with Andrés Ortega, Aitor Pérez, and Ángel Saz-Carranza's idea of "inductive governance," which emphasizes a "bottom-up mode of organizing global collective action" (Ortega et al. 2018). To Ortega and his co-authors, inductive governance "responds to a change in the way governments interact, and to the new weight gained by IGOs, sub-state units, cities, hybrid organizations and entities, businesses such as multinational corporations, NGOs, trade unions, foundations and philanthropic organizations, and citizen movements, experts in academia and think tanks." Ortega, Pérez, and Saz-Carranza also believe international governance needs to be more responsive to public opinion, and one of the advantages they list for inductive government is that it would make governments more accountable to the public.

While Ortega, Pérez, and Saz-Carranza and others emphasize the importance of public support for the legitimacy of multilateralism, there have been relatively few efforts to systematically integrate public opinion within multilateral decision making. However, embedding public opinion more thoroughly into multilateral processes – along with efforts

to incorporate civil society and other non-state actors – could lead to more informed decisions and help boost the legitimacy of multilateral institutions.

There are many ways the public's voice could be more robustly represented in multilateral debates over key international issues. Below I outline an approach that would feature survey research, and I also address some practical issues associated with implementing this approach, including funding and the need for an effective communication strategy.

Incorporating survey research

NGOs, governments, private companies, and academic researchers regularly use surveys to explore public opinion on key international issues. Many of these surveys examine public opinion in a single nation, however a growing number of cross-national research projects also examine major international topics. Still, few are well-integrated into the timeline, agenda, and communication priorities of multilateral institutions.

One recent example of a multilateral institution incorporating survey research into its work is the UN75 campaign. To commemorate the organization's 75th anniversary, in January 2020 "the UN launched a yearlong, global initiative to listen to people's priorities and expectations of international cooperation" (UN 2021). The initiative included a variety of research streams, including public opinion surveys in 50 countries conducted by Pew Research Center and Edelman, and a voluntary one-minute survey which was available on the UN's website as well as various other platforms. The findings provided insights regarding attitudes toward the principles of multilateralism, as well as people's immediate and long-term issue priorities. The results were featured on a number of different platforms in advance of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and a final report on the findings was released in January 2021. The UN75 initiative is a good example of a multilateral institution using survey research to help shape its agenda and outreach efforts.

The UN could consider ways to institutionalize this research process within the annual cycle leading up to UNGA. A relevant example is the Munich Security Conference, which in recent years has included survey research findings in its annual Munich Security Report (Bunde et al. 2022). The report is typically released a few days before its annual conference on global security issues, which consistently brings together a variety of high-profile policymakers and other influential figures in international affairs. Other multilateral organizations and institutions, including the G20, should consider similarly incorporating survey research. The G20, for example, could incorporate an annual survey of publics in G20 member states (plus some number of additional countries, depending on funding and feasibility), and the results could be released in advance of the G20 summit. High-quality cross-national surveys require a considerable amount of planning, which could be done in conjunction with the host nation, although this kind of effort could benefit from the establishment of a permanent G20 secretariat. Other organizations such as the OECD and the Paris Peace Forum could also consider institutionalizing survey research as a means for obtaining input from ordinary citizens about their priorities and concerns. The UN75 research had support from the highest levels of the organization, and to be truly successful, any effort to more formally institutionalize survey research would need similarly strong support from key leaders.

In order to provide high-quality data for decision makers and to have credibility with key audiences, this type of cross-national survey should meet high methodological standards, including methodological transparency, a rigorous translation process, and probability-based nationally representative sample designs that will ensure that all demographic and ideological groups within society are accurately represented.

The topics for such a survey could vary depending on the focus of the multilateral convening. For instance, a survey tied to the G20 could explore issues related to the thematic priorities the host nation has identified for that year. However, certain issues related to major global challenges and international cooperation could be included each year, providing annual trends for tracking changes in public opinion on key global issues. Additionally, the research design should provide opportunities for respondents themselves to make clear their issue priorities, assuring that the issue framework reflects public sentiment rather than being determined in a purely top-down manner.

To complement the public opinion surveys, polls could also be conducted among elite groups to identify the priorities and viewpoints of important stakeholders in the policy making process, as well as to illuminate differences between policy elites and ordinary citizens. A current example of this type of survey is being conducted by the Brookings Institution's Global Economy and Development Program, which, as part of a project on the future of multilateralism, is polling experts around the world on the key challenges and potential reforms of the multilateral system (Dervis and Strauss 2021).

Another example is the Teaching, Research and International Policy program (TRIP) at William & Mary, which regularly surveys International Relations (IR) faculties about key international issues, as well as issues within the discipline of political science. TRIP has often coordinated with Pew Research Center to include questions on its surveys that are parallel to those included on Pew Research surveys in the United States and around the world, allowing for a comparison of public and scholarly opinion. Data from 2020, for instance, revealed that International Relations (IR) scholars were more concerned than ordinary citizens in 14 advanced economies about climate change, but relatively less concerned about terrorism (Poushter and Fagan 2020).

Similarly, Pew Research Center has collaborated with the OECD to survey attendees of the annual OECD Forum, asking them several questions that are also asked of general publics around the world, providing an opportunity to compare citizen views with those of a group highly engaged in policy making. A 2020 study found that both OECD Forum attendees and ordinary citizens in 14 advanced economies were supportive of multilateral approaches to foreign policy, although support was especially strong among Forum attendees (Wike et al. 2020).

A regular program involving surveys of public and elite opinion could provide useful data and analytic insights that could inform decision making by political leaders and others involved in multilateral processes., The gaps between elites and the publics they claim to speak for will be difficult to close, but these types of research programs may help illuminate, and perhaps shrink, these gaps which have played role in fueling political frustration across the globe.

High-quality survey research can be expensive, of course, and identifying funding sources would be crucial to the success of this endeavor. While international organizations may be able to provide some support for these projects, much of the financial support would likely have to come from foundations, wealthy individuals, or corporations, or perhaps public

sources such as national governments or the European Union. And to be effective, these approaches would need strong partnerships with the institutions in charge of multilateral convenings, such as the UN or a G20 host nation (or at some point potentially a G20 secretariat).

Conceivably, a single well-funded research project could establish partnerships with multiple multilateral institutions, providing an ongoing and evolving portrait of citizen sentiment to inform policy makers and others engaged in international cooperation on key issues.

A comprehensive communications and dissemination strategy for making multilateral processes more inclusive would be crucial for success. Again, the UN75 initiative offers a possible model – the results of the survey research, as well as other research efforts such as public dialogues, were important components of the UN's communications around the 75th anniversary of the organization, including outreach priorities such as publications and social media. The findings were also incorporated into the communications of key leaders, including the UNGA address of Secretary General António Guterres. For the G20, one possibility would be to feature the findings at the various engagement group summits, as well as the G20 leaders' summit.

Policymakers would be a key audience, but it would be equally important to reach journalists, think tank representatives, researchers, and the engaged public. The ultimate goal is to use the techniques of survey research to represent and amplify citizen voices in important international debates about the issues that affect their lives.

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Author biography

Richard Wike is director of global attitudes research at Pew Research Center. He conducts research and writes about international public opinion on a variety of topics, such as America's global image, the rise of China, democracy, and globalization. He is an author of numerous Pew Research Center reports and has written pieces for The Atlantic, Foreign Affairs, Financial Times, the Guardian, Politico, Foreign Policy, CNN, BBC, CNBC, and other online and print publications. Wike received a doctorate in political science from Emory University.

Legislative Representation at the Global Level: Addressing the Democratic Failure in Global Governance

Philipp Bien

As the process of globalization has yielded to a period of international crises and challenges in many areas, global governance has increased in scope. Despite current trends of nationalism, international cooperation appears to remain the most promising way forward. Consequently, ordinary citizens are, and will continue to be, impacted by global governance outcomes more directly and profoundly than was true in the past.

At the same time, we can observe growing disenfranchisement among segments of the public over the march of global governance and actions of distant policy-making elites (Fleurbaey 2018). Globally, nationalist parties have been able to tap into this frustration through "us-vs-them" narratives invoking images of citizens taking back control from global elites.

Taking back control implies having lost control previously. What kind of control has been lost? First, global mega-events and -crises have upended the lives of millions of citizens. Second, decisions that are being made on the global level evade democratic control. However, citizens in democracies have high procedural (i.e., democratic) standards for the processes that are governing them. Apart from disappointing outcomes, it is thus also its sub-par processes that are threatening global governance legitimacy in the eyes of democratic publics globally.

This article suggests a new institutional pathway for global governance to improve legitimacy: include national legislatures (as direct representatives of the people) in global governance processes. Such an approach, it is hoped, will reduce the information asymmetry of governments vis-à-vis legislators and the public and provide more accountability.

The Consequences of Globalization

As the pace of globalization has increased over the past decades, so has global governance become more important and central to global order relations. Despite recent and ongoing renationalization processes, the biggest challenges that societies across the world face today remain mostly global in nature. The current COVID-19 pandemic is but the latest

instance of this reality. Other examples are close at hand. They include the global climate crisis, transnational refugee flows, international terrorism, tax fraud and evasion or international crises of financial and debt instability. Recognizing that they cannot deal with many of these issues sufficiently by themselves, national governments have increasingly accepted bi- and multilateral settings at international and global fora to find, if possible, a coordinated policy response to the various crises and challenges. As a result of this recognition, more and more policy areas are being deliberated over in international and global settings (Jang, McSparren and Rashchupkina 2016). In turn, this recognition has led to a growing body of international treaties and, in many instances, institutions that seek to govern areas as diverse as health, climate change, trade, migration, or fiscal policy. The sum of these treaties and international institutions that shape them is what we generally refer to as global governance. Global governance for the purposes here is defined as: "governing, without sovereign authority, relationships that transcend national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home" (Finkelstein 1995, 369).

International affairs and foreign policy today have a much broader scope than before. In the past, international politics concerned managing bi- and multilateral relations with other states mostly pertaining to security and defense, diplomacy, and trade issues (Falk and Strauss 2001). These issues, while undoubtedly of great importance, had by and large rather more abstract consequences on the every-day lives of the vast majority of citizens. But in the current global order, international affairs and global governance outcomes touch upon almost every aspect of citizens' lives and, thus, have major impacts on citizens. To illustrate: whether the global community can agree to efficiently share COVID-19 vaccines and their raw materials such that citizens in, say, Australia can quickly receive their jabs is, arguably, more important to the average Australian than having secured nuclear submarines from the United States through the emerging security alliance AUKUS. In short, international affairs and global governance have become both more ubiquitous and more consequential for the day-to-day lives of people globally.

Waning Public Support for Global Cooperation

With all of the above, it is immensely worrying that support for global governance and international cooperation by many citizens, particularly, but not exclusively, in Western democracies, has continued to wane for some time (Fleurbaey 2018). It is now a widely accepted fact that a substantial share of citizens in the Global North feel disenfranchised from the contemporary global order despite the international system generating increasing economic growth. This phenomenon is also referred to as "globalization backlash" (Walter 2021). Why do we see this backlash today? Several different arguments have emerged and both material (economic) and non-material (political and socio-cultural) causes have been identified that appear to be driving it (Walter 2021). Economically, research has pointed to the fact that higher aggregate GDP numbers for many rich countries have been accompanied by growing economic inequalities between well-educated, wealthy "elitist" winners and the more "ordinary" less well-educated losers (Dreher and Gaston 2008). In other words, globalization has only delivered actual economic and monetary gains for a select winners in national societies. Many governments have been unable, or unwilling, to effectively mitigate the emerging economic inequalities or soften the blow of global challenges for their citizens.

In other words, international cooperation and global governance is marred by its yielding continuing unsatisfactory economic outcomes for too many of its citizens.

Politically, some populist and nationalist political parties and their leaders have successfully tapped into existing and, in some cases, rising anti-globalization sentiments by nurturing politically divisive "us-vs-them" narratives. Commonly, the line of argument raised suggests that distant elites in charge of global governance policymaking, particularly at the global level, do not have the interests of ordinary citizens at heart anymore (Berman 2016). Perceived strongmen, and authoritarian leaders across the world including the likes of former US President Donald Trump, Hungary's Viktor Orban, and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro have won elections by presenting themselves as advocates for the common people, promising to halt globalism and to re-nationalize decision-making. In other countries parties and their leaders, while not necessarily having won elections (yet), have also employed such political messaging. For example, in Germany the far-right party, AfD or in France Marine Le Pen and her National Rally party have sought to urge dramatic re-nationalization of decision making (Golder 2016). In other words, politicization of existing anti-globalization attitudes has taken place across many countries and has, in many cases, proven to be politically successful.

Much has been written about why these narratives and their advocates and proclaimers have been so successful. It certainly appears that the underwhelming economic benefits of global governance for many individuals have contributed substantially to these narratives gaining such traction. It may then be reasonable to assume that if the economic gains of globalization would have been shared more broadly, it is plausible that countries would not have faced this dramatic rise of nationalist parties (Betz 1994). Thus, there remains the impetus to improve the economic outcomes of global governance nationally.

However, this is only part of the answer to the rising nationalist and populist politics. Unsatisfactory global governance outcomes are a necessary condition for the success of 'us-vs-them' narratives, but not in and of itself a sufficient answer. After all, widespread political discontent resulting from government underachievement is hardly a new phenomenon in democracies. Far-right parties have been promoting corrosive narratives and conspiracy theories for many years in many countries (van Prooijen et al. 2015). So, why did these narratives become so successful in contemporary national politics?

Part of the answer, it seems reasonable, can be explained by the ever-increasing saliency of global issues to the lives of many as outlined above. However, a key to answering this question also lies in the 'taking-back-control' narrative itself. Taking back control over something from someone implies having lost control at some point. Hence, the widespread success of 'us-vs-them' narratives can be explained not only by poor global governance performance but also by a pervasive sense among citizens that they do not have control over the events and institutions shaping the policies that affect them so profoundly.

The Democratic Deficit of Global Governance

This sense of loss of control is twofold. First, modern crises like the 2008/09 global financial crisis, persistent refugee crises in Europe and North America, or COVID-19 that have upended the reality of millions to billions around the globe were triggered by people and entities as far removed from the lives of ordinary citizens as they could have possibly

been. Ordinary citizens neither had a role in bringing them about nor could any individual actions be conceived that would come close to mitigating the damage they have done or the threat they have posed. Worse, the entity that individuals usually look to for protection in cases like these, their national governments, seemed – and on many occasions were – helpless. The global forces shaping these events were more powerful than any unilateral national policy could have been.

Second, and closely related, there is a loss of democratic control over the decision and policymaking processes at the global level (Held 2004). This explanation, in part, illustrates why the narrative of a distant elite that does not care about ordinary people resonated so effectively with so many voters. As the outcomes of globalization have been unsatisfactory for many, public disaffection towards the institutions that were created to manage the globalization processes has grown as well. Usually, citizens in democratic societies can sanction sub-par outcomes of governance processes by way of voting incapable governments out of office. However, at the global level citizens lack these effective 'checks and balances' mechanisms to ensure that the actions of their governments at the international level represent citizen interests (Falk and Strauss 2001). The principal-agent chain of delegation has become longer through the addition of the global layer of governance (Jančić 2017), hence the success of narratives that proclaim the need to take back control from the elites. These narratives no longer end when the authority on decision-making is passed on from the voters to legislatures and further to governments. Instead, governments now pass on their authority, vested in them by democratic processes, to international organizations (IOs) of varying memberships, issue foci, or policy-making powers. This overlong delegation chain often has been described as problematic as it is making governance and decision-making processes extremely opaque, unresponsive, and unaccountable. This extended political chain becomes particularly problematic today as we observe a broadening of scope of the content of foreign affairs and a deepening of policy-making powers for international fora and organizations. Today, even classic state powers such as taxation are being deliberated on at the global stage as was evident by the G7 proposal on a global minimum corporate tax rate which subsequently was endorsed and adopted by the G20 and the OECD as well. While these decisions are of course still subject to ratification by national legislatures, no real debate around these issues emerge in many cases as governments pass these policies with their legislative majorities (Jančić 2017). There are a host of other examples mentioned above that today mainly play out internationally when they previously were dealt with domestically. The sum of these examples constitutes a diffusion and transfer of political competencies to levels beyond the nation-state (Jang, McSparren and Rashchupkina 2016). For democratic states, this should come with the imperative to uphold their own principles of democratic governance and overcome the current democratic deficit of global governance. Otherwise, democratically elected governments and the IOs that they are part of face the risk of continuing to lose legitimacy in the eyes of their voters. Citizens in democracies have grown used to being the sovereign and having their interests effectively represented in the political realm by their elected representatives.

Improving Global Governance Legitimacy through Legislative Representation

This loss of legitimacy is precisely what we can already observe today. Thus, next to the ineffectiveness of global governance *outcomes*, the opacity and lack of responsiveness and accountability (i.e., the democratic deficit) marring global governance processes are an equally large challenge for global governance. To overcome the pervasive, "us-vs-them" narratives and, ultimately, the lack of acceptance and legitimacy of global governance, both need to be tackled equally urgently. In fact, one could also make the case that the improvement of processes could be a means through which outcomes could ultimately be enhanced as well.

This begs the question, however: how can global governance processes become more transparent, responsive, and accountable to national citizenry? The current global order evidently lacks mechanisms and channels through which the public can engage and, ultimately, control and scrutinize their governments' behavior on the international and global stages (Jaeger 2007). Public debates on global governance issues play a minor role in the media and also in national legislatures which remain the main body of public deliberation of policy alternatives in democracies (Nanz and Steffek 2004). To date, national legislatures play a minor role in global affairs as legislative representation has traditionally been weak to non-existent at the global level (Follesdal and Hix 2006). This is reflected by a massive information asymmetry around the state of international negotiations on any given issue between government ministers and their bureaucracies on the one hand and the legislators and the larger public on the other. It is no coincidence that legislatures are widely regarded as the institutional losers of the globalization and internationalization of politics (Freyburg, Lavenex, and Schimmelfennig 2017). This decline in importance is a major component of the diagnosed democratic deficit of many intergovernmental organizations. In fact, political theory holds that the role of legislatures in democracies should and does stop at 'the water's edge' of foreign policy where an area of executive privileges and responsibilities begin (Raunio and Wagner 2017). In other words, there exist no checks and balances, as we know them from national democracies or in the case of Europe the European Union, on the global and international level. This has historical reasons. Foreign policy evolved as relationships between states and, thus, governments. Ensuring the security of the nation and managing diplomatic ties was an exclusive responsibility for governments, standing above the domestic politics of the nation-state. Crucially, effective security policy involves both secrecy and urgency, both of which legislatures cannot provide (Raunio and Wagner 2017). However, today, as stated above, foreign policy and international affairs is no longer just about security, diplomacy, and trade. Rather, over the past decades during which globalization has become ever more pronounced, few policy areas have remained exclusively domestic as many have at some point been the subject of international deliberations and, sometimes, regulations. In other words, the contemporary world is more integrated than ever before (Kahler 2009). This has resulted in foreign policy outcomes impacting the lives of average citizens much more directly and profoundly than ever before. Thus, the unfettered dominance of the executives and their bureaucracies on the international level looks increasingly outdated. The more issues that come on the global governance agenda, the more pressing is the need to overcome the democratic deficit of global governance processes. It requires governments to regain

public support in democratic societies, and in turn, diffuse nationalist narratives of distant, non-responsive and unaccountable policymaking elites.

From a domestic politics viewpoint, democratic legislatures are tasked with four primary functions: policymaking, linkage, representation, and control/oversight (Kreppel 2014). While legislatures are not able to perform any of these functions internationally, the absence of the latter two arguably harm the public support of contemporary global governance the most. Closer scrutiny and oversight of the executive on the global stage and the communication of such scrutiny could provide some much-needed context on global governance issues for national publics. By debating contextual questions around specific global summits and fora such as "What is being discussed?", "Why is it important to act on this issue by way of international cooperation?", "What is a given government's stance on the issue and why?", and "What are other available policy alternatives and approaches?" could reduce the prevailing sense of opaqueness surrounding global governance and how decisions are being made on the global level, especially, if these discussions and their outcomes find themselves broadcast prominently in public and private media outlets. In short, if domestic legislatures were given the chance to participate in international politics, it could help to improve transparency and accountability of global governance issues.

Turning to representation, including national legislatures also holds some promise. Undoubtedly, in many instances legislators, as directly elected representatives of the voters, are much closer to the citizens than government ministers or their bureaucracies. Hence, MPs could play a crucial role in fostering the understanding and acceptance for international negotiations and act as a transmission belt and two-way street between citizens and governments (Stavridis and Jančić 2016). On the one hand, MPs and their local offices could, through their constituency work, inform their electorates on current global and international deliberations that might have a direct impact on the lives of their voters. On the other hand, MPs, could fulfill their duty of representation more wholistically if their efforts extended not only to domestic politics but also to international and global politics. In turn, citizens would be given the opportunity to punish or reward their MPs not just for their representation in domestic but also in international politics. Reinstating this more direct path between citizens and the loci of consequential decision- and policymaking would give back citizens their voice in international politics thereby counteracting the current sense of loss of control over the global powers that so profoundly influence their lives.

In the absence of global legislatures, domestic ones could be valuable in filling the void. But how could this work within the current institutional architecture of global governance? Generally, the organizations where international deliberations take place can be distinguished between so-called general-purpose IOs and task specific IOs (Rocabert, Schimmelfenning, Crasnic and Winzen 2019). As their names indicate, the former type of IO has no specific policy focus but rather debate a broad range of issues, whereas the latter IO form is concerned with more specific policy (sub-) areas (Rocabert, Schimmelfenning, Crasnic and Winzen 2019). As these organizations differ in what they are trying to achieve, they could benefit from a slightly different kind of legislative participation, respectively. In task specific IOs, it could be more fruitful to include the legislators with the relevant policy expertise in the respective fields. For instance, at summits of the World Health Organization (WHO), domestic MPs who are members of various health committees, and relevant subcommittees – crucially of both the opposition and government parties – could participate to ensure that the decisions that are being made rely on broad and deep expertise and, thus,

are more likely to have beneficial outcomes for societies. As legislators become part of the international negotiations, this would help in bridging the information deficit between them and their governments. In turn, legislators can: (1) communicate this information to their constituencies; and (2) hold their governments to account more effectively. In other words, global governance would become both more transparent and accountable to the average citizen.

In contrast, where general-purpose IOs, or informal fora such as the G20 are concerned, government and opposition party members of the legislatures' financial or foreign affairs committees of the member states could be included in the deliberations, participate at the summits, and offer alternative policy pathways to what their respective governments are suggesting. For instance, a first step for the G20 towards the effective inclusion of national legislatures could be the establishment of a new engagement group – let us propose the Parliamentary20 (P20). Where government and opposition foreign policy, and perhaps other, experts, could come together in the P20 to debate which issues on the international agenda are the most crucial to their constituents at home. Much like other current engagement groups today, such as the B20, L20 and T20, the P20 could produce recommendations for the G20 governments on what should be on the agenda of the summit and which issues are most important to their constituents. Ultimately, however, the goal should be to achieve a more complete inclusion of MPs throughout the entire year-cycle of presidencies. To make legislators equal contributors to the various debates, the information deficit between governments vis-à-vis individual legislators should be minimized as much as possible to allow them and, in turn, the publics they represent, to gain a complete picture of other member states' positions on the deliberated issues and the considerations that are informing their own governments' position. If government and opposition legislators could be effectively included in both general-purpose IOs as well as task-specific ones, the representation of interests at the global level beyond the respective national majority could be improved significantly and contribute to a more accountable process. In national democracies, the role of representing interests of minorities is a task for legislatures. At the global level, this task is only filled, if at all, by civil society organizations which often have a narrow issue focus and cannot claim to legitimately speak for the citizenry as a whole (Falk and Strauss 2001). Protecting minority rights should, thus, be another impetus for including legislatures in global governance.

Conclusion

In sum, in the face of the growing challenges that confront the global order, foreign policy and international political processes are only going to become more important for the everyday lives of citizens around the world, irrespective of some nationalist leaders' chanting that they will take back control. In other words, increasingly public policy will likely be foreign and international policy. Against this backdrop and to overcome contemporary divisive nationalist 'us-vs-them' narratives, global governance must live up to higher procedural standards if it is to protect its legitimacy in democratic societies. Over the past, citizens in democracies have developed minimum standards for the political processes that are governing their lives and, currently, global governance does not live up to these democratic procedural standards. This is particularly evident by the absence of legislatures

in global governance. Legislators are currently not able to perform any of their democratic duties at the international and global levels. As a result, global governance suffers from a lack of separation of powers. No legislative oversight and scrutiny combined with the absence of citizen representation and poor disaggregated economic outcomes are driving popular discontent with global governance in modern democratic societies. In fact, it becomes all the more difficult for citizens to accept any global governance outcomes – particularly those they do not agree with or have detrimental outcomes for them individually – if the global decision-making progress has not been legitimized by democratic procedures. Depending on the institution or IO concerned, legislators could be included in different ways. Task-specific IOs could benefit from the inclusion of domestic government and opposition 'expert-legislators' of the respective policy area. General purpose IOs, discussing broader, high-level agendas for global cooperation might be better served by the inclusion of foreign policy committee members, again of both government and opposition parties. It is, in any case, time for reform agendas to move past the contemporary and, at times, exclusive focus on output legitimacy (i.e. the quality of global governance outcomes). Rather, we should take a hard look at input and throughput legitimacy and improve global governance procedures such that it can more fully regain acceptance and support of the global citizenry.

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Author biography

Philipp Bien is a 2021 Master of Global Affairs Graduate from the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto where he specialized in development policy. Since June 2021 he worked at the Global Summitry Project as a Research Assistant. In April he plans to begin his PhD in International Relations at the University of Konstanz focusing on the role of national legislatures in global politics.

Disrupted Order: G20 Global Governance at a Time of Geopolitical Crisis

Yves Tiberghien

This article evaluates the outcomes of the Rome G20 in October 2021 and the forces behind those outcomes. Overall, the results were meager and far below current needs for coordination in the context of major global disruptions. I argue that leaders of major countries have increasingly engaged in cognitive dissonance: there is a fast-growing gap between their continued official support for G20 procedures and their refusal to cooperate with each other. The G20 may have become a limited safety net of sorts, or a custodian of increasingly limited norms of cooperation. But the main action is elsewhere in the face of rising geopolitical tensions: the gradual weaponization of globalization, a growing rift between China and the West, and the outright rejection of the global order by Russia post February 24, 2022.

In this difficult context, the G20 managed to make progress in global environmental governance (climate and biodiversity) by setting clear goals for the first time. The G20 also made advances in global taxation and other second-tier issues. But the Rome G20 could not provide meaningful coordination or guidance on three most pressing global governance issues: the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing fragmentation of the trading order, and the cyber and AI revolution. And the absence of both Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping may have been a portend of the massive crisis of early 2022. In the wake of the Ukraine invasion, the existence of the G20 model itself is at stake.[21]

Introduction

The Rome G20 Leaders' Summit met on October 30-31, 2021. It was the first in-person G20 Leaders' Summit since the COVID-19 pandemic started in December 2019. It was also the first full G20 Summit of the post-Trump era, and it featured the return of a US president committed to the global liberal order and to multilateralism for the first time since 2016. Additionally, the Rome G20 Summit benefitted from an experienced Chair, given that Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi had attended many past G20 ministerial meetings in his capacity as President of the European Central Bank (ECB). This 'Draghi advantage' was somewhat 'blunted', however, by a change of the Italian Sherpa half-way through the year.

[21] This article incorporates elements from my article published with East Asia Forum on November 8, 2021, "The good, the bad and the incongruous at the Rome G20."

Given the G20's self-assigned role as "the premier forum for international economic cooperation," (G20 Research Group 2021) the urgency of managing the post-pandemic world economy, and the worsening climate change situation, expectations toward the Rome Leaders' Summit were high. Indeed, the G20 summit process in late 2021 faced an extremely challenging mission: it was tasked with reconciling the enduring reality of economic and environmental interdependence with the other reality of serious ongoing disruptions. These disruptions included: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change challenges, the digital and AI revolutions, social backlash against global capitalism in some countries, and a growing great power rivalry between China and the United States.

Would the leaders of the world's most powerful countries and international institutions gathering around the G20 table help forestall forces of fragmentation and foster effective collective responses to shared crises? Could the G20 process help mediate the growing tensions between key members, especially tensions between Western countries and China and Russia, as well as North-South tensions over climate and pandemic equity issues? Can the G20 serve as the line of defense for global connectivity and global cooperation under very tough geopolitical circumstances?

In terms of process and viability, the Rome G20 was hampered by the absence of six leaders out of 21 (the EU has two leaders, hence the number 21). Such an absence was unrepresentative of past leaders' summits. Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has not appeared at any global summit and 'true to form' did not appear at the G20 Rome Summit. Saudi Arabia's leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud was absent. And South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa was held up by elections at home. All three were represented by competent foreign ministers with experience in multilateralism. More serious for the G20 ability to advance collective compromise was the absence of three of the most powerful countries: China, Russia, and Japan. Japan's new Prime Minister Kishida Fumio was held up by crucial general elections in the wake of his nomination as Prime Minister on October 4, 2021. His absence and the relative 'green' nature of his Cabinet meant that Japan could not be an effective player in these leader-level discussions. Russia's Vladimir Putin skipped the summit due to the COVID-19 situation, but probably also because of his increasing isolation from global diplomacy and a dark inward turn – as later revealed by his brutal invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

China's leader, Xi Jinping, as it turns out, had not left the country since January 2020. It would appear that his unwillingness to travel is driven by his determination to fight a zero-COVID-19 strategy after the national trauma of the Wuhan COVID-19 explosion early in 2020. No summit abroad is important enough, it seems, at the moment, to break that pattern. Additionally, President Xi seems far more focused on the enormous domestic political maneuvers needed to secure a norm-breaking third term as Party Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the 20th Party Congress in the fall of 2022. In that heavy domestic context and in the wake of increasingly ideological posturing toward outside rivals during the pandemic years, he was probably not ready to face a strong US-led pushback at the G20. President Xi did deliver a speech at the G20 by video conference and was represented by a large delegation of able officials headed by Foreign Minister Wang Yi. However, in the complex Chinese governing system, and given his lack of seat on the Politburo, Wang Yi's authority to craft any compromise with other countries is essentially nil. The Chinese lineup at the Rome G20 ensured that China would stick to agreements negotiated by Sherpas prior to the actual Leaders' Summit.

The Rome G20 Leaders' Summit – A Failing Grade But There Is Some Hope

The Rome G20 Summit produced a mixed, and in fact, limited outcome. The Leaders' Declaration (G20 Research Group 2021) is a rather 'stuffy' technical and overly aspirational document – unfortunately not that unusual for a leaders' declaration. In terms of managing critical systemic risks and forestalling the potential fragmentation of global interdependence, the results seem less than ideal. On the big three critical issues of pandemic management, global trade and inequality, and cyber and AI governance, the G20 appears to offer a 'failing grade'. There was simply no ability among leaders, it seems, to envision an effective outcome and the necessary compromises to reach it. However, there was limited but significant progress on the fourth critical systemic issue of our times: climate change and biodiversity preservation. And there was significant cooperation and delivery on a series of second tier issues – global taxation, support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and on global debt relief for lower income economies. Most importantly, the G20 leaders all committed to a series of global norms and principles, including climate, sustainable development, health, education, and global cooperation. After two G20 Summits that ended up with 19+1 declarations forced by the US dissenting on issues of climate and trade, this Declaration and Summit indicated willingness again to share common goals.

In reviewing the Italian year, we seem to identify a growing dissonance in the behavior of key states in the G20. On the one hand, members increasingly refused to invest in the G20 process to address the systematically most important issues, given their current focus on competitive national dynamics. On the other hand, they continued to show attachment to the G20 process itself and to ensure some limited progress.

In addressing this G20 growing dissonance, it appears, the preferences of key states toward global governance and the G20 has fundamentally changed between 2008-2015 and the post 2017 period. Their evaluation of the necessity for global cooperation has been downgraded relative to domestic and security priorities, and the trust in each other and in global cooperation has decreased significantly. The 2008-2009 global financial crisis (GFC) did trigger an enormous though too rare global coordination through the G20. This coordination continued until around 2010. True, the crisis itself resulted from a failure of domestic financial regulation in the US and beyond and the frontline firefighters were the central banks, coordinated by the US Federal Reserve, as well as the US Treasury (authorized by Congress through The Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP). However, the G20 leaders' summits in 2008-2010 played a powerful supportive role by coordinating global efforts around fiscal stimulus packages, doubled funding for the IMF, and creation of the Financial Stability Board (FSB). These efforts were part of an emerging global financial monitoring and safety net, prevention of beggar-thy-neighbor currency dynamics similar to those of the 1930s, prevention of trade protectionism, and a series of other key regulatory efforts. As well, the G20 summits and the long series of Sherpa-level, ministerial level or informal summits between such summits provided crucial space for information sharing, trust building and diffusion of tensions. The fact is, the global institutional system enlivened by the G20 creation, did deliver an effective response (Drezner 2014; Tooze 2018).

From 2011 to 2016, G20 effectiveness gradually faded as the focal power of the crisis

slipped into the past and centrifugal tensions rose. Nevertheless, key players continued to have a stake in the G20 and to deliver occasional significant outcomes. In contrast, it seems to me that the period of 2017-2021 marked a change of dominant global governance paradigm for key players. The period moved from a minimal shared management of global interdependence to competitive disengagement with only limited coordination. The critical players in this process were the US under Donald Trump and China – as well as Russia, the UK after Brexit, Turkey, India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia, but the dynamic has proved so far irreversible even under Joe Biden. The pandemic only accelerated this process. Interestingly, a few important players retain significant commitment to the global management of integration: the European Union, Canada, and Japan. But these actors don't have the collective heft to reverse the heavy momentum set by the great powers and their followers.

Regarding the curious continuous adhesion of most G20 players to the process itself and to a degree of deliverables on second-tier issues, it seems this attachment arises from three sources. First, G20 states are willing and eager to retain a safety net of sorts if their dominant national strategies fail. Second, global cooperation norms in support of global interdependence remain dominant, even though major players don't always maintain them in practice. This cooperation is due to the speed of the current transition of the global order and the lack of new dominant norms to replace old ones. As well, dominant players are not yet willing to publicly own their great power competitive behavior and find instead that it is convenient to hide it behind a continuing official commitment to shared global norms. Third, even the US and China still find the G20 platform useful as a forum for discussion, and a chance to convey messages, share information, learn about allies and rivals, and update their beliefs and preferences. Obviously, in the wake of the Ukraine invasion by Russia, this is no longer the case. It has become all but unthinkable to imagine a Russia under Putin present at the G20. This may have rather negative consequences for the G20. But we will have to see.

I. Measuring Outcomes: Rome Summit Scorecards Relative to Governance Needs

The rationale for having the G20 lies in the growing externalities, public good requirements and systemic risks generated by the acceleration of global integration since the early 1980s (Alexandroff et al. 2020; Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Bradford and Linn 2007; Drezner 2014; Kaul et al. 1999; Kaul and United Nations Development Programme 2003; Kindleberger 1988; Kirton 2013; Sandler 2004; Tiberghien 2017; Tiberghien et al. 2019). Economic connectivity and interdependence already existed in the 19th and early 20th century in an earlier incarnation, albeit one shared by only 15 or so countries and with much simpler technology (Angell 1910; Berger 2003). The modern version of economic globalization really took off to new levels in terms of breadth, reach, intrusiveness, and speed after about 1980 (Garrett 2000; Keohane and Milner 1996; King 2017; Stiglitz 2002). This new high-speed economic integration has generated powerful global markets, global forces, global economic actors, and global risks that often reach beyond national governance. In this global context, the spillovers made it impossible for individual states to monitor and regulate markets, manage crises, generate public goods and deal with systemic risks on their own. Global markets require global rules, and global systemic risks require global cooperation. Markets and interchange require stability, information, trust, security, and other forms of

governance to be able to survive over time (North 1990; Williamson 1985). And adequate governance must be provided at the global level. Yet, the basis for such provision is on thin ground, since power and sovereignty lie at the national level with states the dominant actors under today's Westphalian system. The answer to this conundrum became a US-led effort to add a layer of global institutions and cooperation among those states, which became part of the so-called Liberal International Order (Ikenberry 2011).

The initial post-war response to the need for order and coordination, as well as global stability, was to create new global political institutions (the United Nations) and economic institutions separate from the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the aborted International Trade Organization, the ITO, that became the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and then later the World Trade Organization (WTO) through and alongside a power structure provided by US hegemony (Ikenberry 2011; Kissinger 2014). This system is often referred to as the rules-based international order by the likes of Canada, Australia, Japan, or Europe. But Ikenberry (2011) calls it a fused system combining elements of hierarchy (US power) and constitutionality (rules and institutions). On the economic and ecological front, the stability of this system lies in the balance between global forces or markets and the governing capacity of global institutions.

Post 1990, the functional demands on this governance structure expanded exponentially. With massive financial, trade, and investment deregulation and the addition of the advent of the Internet, global markets and global digital reality took a scale and impact never seen before. With growing opportunity costs of closure and effective pressures from the US and allies, the world joined in this globalization process, including China and India. Managing these markets and dealing with crashes such as the GFC became much more complex. Meanwhile, massive connectivity, population growth, technological sophistication, environmental destruction, and the removal of national circuit-breakers generated a level of systemic risks never seen before (Goldin and Mariathasan 2014).

Given the inability of any power to manage such economic interdependence and the absence of mandate for the UN to manage the global economy, Paul Martin of Canada and Colin Bradford and Johannes Linn of Brookings called for the urgent addition of a Leaders 20 – an L20 (Bradford and Lin 2007). The G20 came into being in November 2008 at the height of the GFC, even though various proposals had been vetted prior to the crisis.

The nominal demands on the G20 are actually huge. The task at hand is nothing less than to generate cooperative global institutions and policy convergence among systemically important countries in order to thwart the collapse of the global economy, generate rules and norms to manage global flows, deal with global public goods, and generate collective responses to systemic risks. When the G20 fails to act, there is no effective back up system, given that no country, however powerful, is up to the collective tasks of interdependence management and no regional or club grouping can do more than postpone major crises.

The current period sees the parallel emergence of several systemic risks: the potential collapse of the global trading or financial system, climate change and the collapse of ecological biodiversity, global pandemics, the existential risks of the digital and AI revolution, with the potential of making humanity redundant within decades (Bostrom 2015; Ord 2020; Tiberghien et al. 2021). We also witness the greatest power transition since 1850, with 21 percent of global GDP changing hands from developed to emerging economies between 2000 and 2020 (with two-thirds of that change driven by the rise of China). We observe that these trends are accompanied by increased great power competition and growing

struggles over global rules and institutions, possibly because of the erosion of the US hegemony and lack of consensus among states, alongside the resurgence of grievances and mutual suspicion. This, in turn, has led to growing conflicts and asymmetric exploitation of vulnerabilities in globalization itself (Drezner et al. 2021; Farrell and Newman 2019; Leonard 2021).

In this context, we face high global cooperation requirements, namely finding collective cooperative responses to those risks and ensuring a stable and fair management of global connectivity without catastrophe. Some see this as the mission for the G20. Others, such as the US and possibly China see the G20 as only a limited part of the solution and prefer to mount partial coalitions or groups to provide elements of governance. The G20, however, should play some role as it draws together divergent interests between established and emerging powers despite security competition.

Relative to such needs and the urgency of current files, how do we evaluate the outcomes of the Rome G20? Table 1 offers my evaluation of the Rome Summit, including scorecards ranked from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) on systemic and secondary issues facing the G20. While the rankings are subjective, this evaluation is based on the close read of the G20 Rome Declaration and accompanying documents. A score of one (1) means that the issue is not addressed. A score of five (5) or more means some degree of meaningful global coordination. A score of two to four (2-4) means some normative progress, but a lack of concrete mechanisms and institutions to bring these norms to reality. A score of four (4) indicates the setting of a clear target, albeit without a concrete credible action plan.

Table 1. Scorecards of G20 Rome Outcomes Relative to Governance Needs

	Outcomes	**Governance Needs**	**Score (1 lowest-10 highest)**
TIER 1: SYSTEMIC ISSUES			
Pandemic	Support for private sector vaccine production deals for WHO	Massive, coordinated support of global vaccines and drugs, stronger WHO	2
Digital and AI – you might add China proposal for legal text on autonomous robots. Rejected by Japan, US, and others	Normative mention of data free flow and fair access	New global governance capacity	1
Climate Change and Ecological Emergency (Biodiversity, Oceans)	First time normative commitment to 1.5C and 2030 biodiversity targets, many pages in declaration	Massive global mobilization and new technology development	4

TIER 1: SYSTEMIC ISSUES	**Outcomes**	**Governance Needs**	**Score (1 lowest-10 highest)**
Global Trade and Inequality/Anger	Normative commitment to global trade, no action	Agreements on updated WTO rules and Dispute Settlement	2
Global Financial Crises Prevention & Management	Normative recommitment to IMF reforms and principles	IMF quota reforms, strong global safety net and monitoring, common regulations	2
Poverty Alleviation and Global Justice	Commitment to SDGs, limited commitment to SDR use and DSSI	Major commitment of resources and support for green development through global markets and support	2
TIER 2- REGULATORY ISSUES			
Global Taxation	Support for OECD-negotiated 15 percent minimal tax	Global enforceable rules and agreement	6
Anti-Corruption	Continued support for coordination and norms	Global coordination against enablers, including tax havens	4
Migration	Support for global norms	Preparation of massive resources and institutions	2
Education and Youth	Shared progressive principles and good practices	Institutions and resources	3
Global Agriculture and Food Markets	Normative mentions but no actionable items	Reform of global markets to support fair revenues	1
Global Infrastructure	Reaffirmation of shared principles and willingness to cooperate	Global coordination and cooperation on quality green infrastructure up to scale	3
Global Space Commons	Nothing	New global governance capacity	1

The results are rather sobering. The G20 is not generating meaningful responses to nearly any systemically important issues beyond common normative statements that recognize the importance of these issues. Leaders are either lacking innovative capacity or

are showing little interest to work collectively toward existential threats.

We do see some progress, however, on one systemic issue (climate change and biodiversity) and to a secondary degree on pandemic management. We also see some significant progress on a number of secondary issues, such as global taxation. And G20 leaders continue to be willing to collectively commit to solve most global issues after acknowledging them, but without investing in solutions. There is a remarkable resilience in global norms of collective cooperation, despite the absence of actual investment. It is also important to note that the G20 outputs remain an elite process and that leaders have gradually decreased their personal investment in explaining the outcomes to their citizenry. There remains some global media interest in the pageantry of the G20, but not much attention to the more essential presence or lack of outcomes on key files.

II. Stalemate on the Big Three Systemic Issues: Pandemic, Cyber And AI, and Trade and Inequality

As pointed out by Adam Triggs (2021), the G20 was not able to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine distribution as it should. The G20 merely accompanied the growing mobilization of the private sector of the US and China, and others around the world to reach 70 percent vaccination by mid-2022. But this codification of global focal targets is still useful. The commitment to meaningful reforms and budget increase of the WHO and to reforms of the International Health Regulations is a key move in the right direction. Yet, there was no actual breakthrough in making such reforms a reality. In particular, it would require a credible commitment by the US to the long-term sustainability and financing of the WHO (or an alternative global surveillance agency). It would require, additionally, a credible commitment by China and other large countries (including the US) toward rapid acceptance of WHO teams of experts during pandemic outbreaks.

On global trade, the G20 declaration reaffirms principles, and a commitment to the WTO but offers no specific commitment to restart the dispute settlement mechanism or make an agreement on core disputed issues such as the role of subsidies, technology transfer, or digital and data governance. The US has blocked the appointment of judges to the WTO Appellate Body since 2019 and the gap between China and the US and its allies is very large on questions such as domestic subsidies and technology transfers. Additionally, the language on the crucial issue of inequality and exclusion does not begin to provide blueprints that can address the urgency and scale of the crisis.

The G20 is also totally behind the curve on the massive acceleration of the digital/AI economy or the space economy, where new corporate giants currently operate in a near governance vacuum. The few paragraphs focus on data free flows and access to technology. This is a complete lack of acknowledgement of the urgency of global cooperation and regulations in the cyber and AI space. Here too, we can note a large spectrum of governance proposals between players, some of whom are eager to move forward with regulation (led by the EU) and others that are opposed to any global rule-making beyond market opening (led by the US). Other countries, such as India, Indonesia, and others insist on some data localization requirements to enable the creation of infant digital industries. As for China, it sees digital governance as integral to the preservation of its authoritarian rule and is reluctant to accept global rules, beyond elements such as privacy and IP protection from corporations.

In fact, the G20 is currently unable to truly function as the incubator for the reforms of global governance institutions that the world needs to manage global markets and pressing systemic risks. Contrary to early hopes, it is proving unable yet to manage frictions between established and emerging powers. There are three proximate reasons for this. First, the US, as the ongoing primary 'owner operator' of the liberal international order, is not interested in facilitating structural change at the global level. The US is not ready to empower the G20 to broker compromises among systematically important countries. The US prefers to combine its powerful leadership with *ad hoc* coalitions, such as the G7 and the Quad. The partial window that opened in 2008 in the US with regards to the usefulness of the G20 probably closed in 2016. Second, the ever-accelerating US-China competition and the collapse of mutual trust between China and the West greatly limits G20 possibilities. And third, most G20 leaders either face domestic turmoil, or at least extremely constraining domestic politics. It is hard to find any country, where working for the global public good at the G20 resonates with domestic voters and can result in political rewards for leaders.

The deeper reasons for declining G20 global governance commitment primarily lie in the shift that took place with the Trump presidency in 2017, but also at least partially in China, Russia, India, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UK. All reflect the diminishing importance given to global governance and global cooperation, relative to domestic solutions. Not only have these countries reduced trust in other G20 partners, they have also increasingly discounted the usefulness and role of global governance mechanisms themselves. In light of the reality of global interdependence and shared risks, this trend is itself generating new global risks. The logical implications will be both decreased global connectivity (whether gradual or through ruptures) and weakening ability to handle systemic risks.

III. Normative and Actual Progress in Some Issue Areas

Given the larger dominant processes analyzed above, it is surprising to see some limited progress on two systemic issues (climate and the SDGs) and significant progress on secondary issues, example global taxation.

Compared to G20 summits in the last four years, the Chair did not have to resort to 19 vs 1 contortions on climate, trade, or SDGs. The commitments to SDGs and climate are unanimously reinforced. In fact, the Leaders' Statement goes further than ever before in acknowledging the climate crisis and codifying long-term aspirations. For the first time, there is a strong indication that 1.5°C of warming should be a key target. Leaders also support the goal of protecting 30 percent of land and oceans by 2030 as well as the firm commitment to ending all public financing for coal power plants abroad. All this is significant.

Meanwhile, the G20 commitment to a minimum 15 percent level of taxation for large global multinationals (as codified by OECD) is a breakthrough, even though it will have to be legislated throughout the world, a particularly difficult task in the US. Also significant is the shift involved in taxation of digital profits based on the place of consumption and not the place of physical production. In sum, we continue to see against all odds some limited incremental progress. We also see continued normative commitment to broad-based cooperation. The machinery of the G20 is still churning, including working group meetings, task forces, ministerial meetings, and Sherpa meetings, as well as meetings with engagement

groups. The annual host country continues to have some autonomy in advancing some key issues in an entrepreneurial way.

This reveals an interesting dimension. Even the most skeptical countries remain unwilling to unravel what constitutes one of the last lines of defense of the collective management capacity of global interdependence and global governance. Larger players may have most of their attention currently focused on strategic competition, partial decoupling and reshoring, and fractious domestic politics. The systemic competition between the US and China at the heart of the G20 is currently toxic, plagued by ideological conflict, security confrontation, and profound accusations. Gone is the actual commitment to working together, even though the formality of shared processes in the G20 remain. However, as with the UN itself, the G20 remains useful to systemic players as a forum for discussion and a place to effectively learn about friends and rivals. The G20 also offers some useful joint monitoring function and helps address the growing cognitive gaps and misunderstandings among major players (Tiberghien 2020). And the G20 remains useful to key states due to its capacity to help fix small irritants and plug small holes in global governance.

The continued normative agreement around key principles remains interesting. It is both a legacy of past cooperation and a reflection of the difficulty in generating new norms. It may also be a sign of cognitive dissonance in the policies pursued by the major players. While they are directing their energy to strategic competition, they continue to retain some secondary belief in global interdependence and a fast-disappearing liberal international order. And this includes China.

Conclusion

The Rome G20 can be seen as a 'pressure-relieving valve' that cleared some air, changed the global conversation, and offered shared commitments for some matters to mobilize around. The Rome Summit also enabled side conversations that resulted in some significant deals (EU-US steel and aluminum deal) and openings (Turkey-US), or crucial clarifications – in the case of the Antony Blinken-Wang Yi meeting. Despite extremely strong adverse currents, the Rome G20 Summit played a positive role in inserting common energy to counteract the growing entropy of global politics and coordinate various global actors toward common goals. It embodies the resilience of the norms of global interdependence and the continuing strengths of global epistemic communities.

These elements of normative resilience and limited progress should not hide, however, the reality of a large governance gap between the functional requirements of the G20 as the only game in town in terms of possible collective economic and environmental management of global interdependence and its current actual delivery. The US consensus, such as it is, has moved away from the belief in global cooperation and multilateral institutions. The Biden Administration has favored smaller partnerships and a 'democracy versus autocracy' framing of global order rather than promoting closer global cooperation. Given the pivotal role of the US in the construction of the post-war global economic and security system, this poses a significant problem. The outcome is a net decrease in the global capacity to handle crises (such as COVID-19 and climate change) and increasingly global volatility.

This gap between global governance capacity and global systemic needs continues to

grow. And it marks a decreasing commitment by key major players to both global governance and global interdependence itself, particularly the US. The fallback focus on reduced collaboration among trusted friends, plurilateral engagement, is not a credible avenue for solving global systemic risks and maintain a global economic system. This situation will only change when the US and other key countries realize that even a limited global order requires greater collective cooperation. Even a more decoupled global order requires guard rails, minimal common rules, and space to reduce misperceptions. And elites must do a better job to regain the trust and support of citizens, which in turn requires building a fairer and more equitable global interdependence.

On February 24, 2022, with the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine, the state of global cooperation embedded in the G20 concept took a marked turn for the worse. With this move, and the barbaric urban siege tactics used, Russia signified its total rejection of the existing global order, UN norms and laws, and global cooperation. It is as if a mask was suddenly removed, and Russia reappeared as a vindicative 19th century Czarist regime with no interest in a rules-based order. Russia's role in the G20 and in any global institutions now appear to be just a farce.

Sure enough, the US, Canada, Europe, Japan, and many other countries responded by cutting off Russia from most links to the global economy, save two: energy markets and the Chinese connection. At the time of writing, Russia and the West are teetering on the brink of possible direct conflict. And China is tainted by the guilt of association with Russia, after the Russia-China Declaration of a tacit partnership signed on February 4, 2022.

How the world emerges from the depth of this crisis is difficult to predict. One scenario is an expanded war. A second scenario is a breakdown of cooperation between the West and not just Russia, but also China. That would lead to the end of the G20 model and a return to a fragmented world of coalitions: a G7+ model would face off with a China coalition and other regional coalitions. The problem with such a model is that China and the West remain deeply embedded in mutual interdependence and unraveling this interdependence is impossible without massive economic and social upheaval for both sides. A third, and rather better scenario would see China edge away from Russia. China, the G7, and others would work toward a reformed model of global cooperation, without which effective global governance is not possible. This third option could lead to a resumption of the G20, albeit without Russia until a new leadership replaces Putin and changes course. In any case, if we thought that the Rome G20 was disappointing, 2022 and the Indonesia G20 Summit appears to be even more of a challenge.

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Author biography

Yves Tiberghien is Professor of Political Science and the Konwakai Chair in Japanese Research at the University of British Columbia. He is a Distinguished Fellow at the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada and the Canadian PAFTAD Chair.

A Concluding Thought on Strengthening Global Governance by Strengthening the G20

Alan S. Alexandroff

Going Forward with some Trepidation

In the face of current Russian aggression there is growing concern over the effectiveness indeed the viability of the G20. We have seen this global summitry conundrum before. It emerged as I pointed out in a recent East Asia Forum post (2022) in the following way and again with Russian membership but in this instance in the then G8:

> The issue of Russian aggression was first vetted in 2014 due to its annexation of Crimea. At the time, the United States and other members of the G7/8 agreed to suspend Russia from the G8. Russia had participated at the leaders' level beginning in 1998, though it was never invited to participate in the critical finance ministers and central bankers' meetings. In the face of Russia's Crimea, the G7 leaders suspended the country, leading Moscow to walk away in 2017.

Unlike the suspension of Russia in the G8 there is no unanimity of opinion over the suspension, or the ejection of Russia from the G20. And there is in fact no mechanism. But as evident already there is a serious distraction for leaders over the question. And there is no easy path for the host which in the case of the G20 in 2022 is Indonesia. As pointed out by FTs Gillian Tett (2022): "To defuse the row, the Indonesian government might end up having to scrap the joint communique on April 20th altogether. But this leaves the G20 looking impotent."

The dilemma is real. On the one hand there is an urgent need to address critical global governance issues – a global recovery from the pandemic, recovery planning for Ukraine, focused planning for the next pandemic, and serious collective steps to advance a transition to a decarbonized world. On the other hand, a gathering with Putin in attendance, particularly if it is in person, raises difficult politics for the strongest critics within the G7, if not all, and Australia.

Initially, President Biden had urged Indonesia, the host of the upcoming G20 summit, to eject Putin but failing that to invite Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the Bali Summit. And, in fact this is what Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo did in a phone call with President Zelenskyy recently. However, it does not appear that this is now sufficient (Widakuswara 2022): "… to invite Ukraine to the November summit in Bali is not enough to ensure the attendance of U.S. President Joe Biden — unless Russian President Vladimir Putin is excluded from the gathering." Widodo and his officials have continued to urge attendance at the Bali Summit: "We understand the G-20 has a catalyst role in global economic recovery, and when we speak of global economic recovery, there are two important factors right now: COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine," Widodo said in a video remark, outlining the rationale of his invitation to Zelenskyy."

If Putin chooses to attend in person, then there could be a number of quite awkward

moments including such instances as the group photograph. If Putin choose not to attend in person that could reduce the awkwardness for many leaders. But in the end the central issue is not whether Putin attends or not, but the determination by leaders to tackle the critical and ever more difficult global governance challenges. Global governance leadership is critical, but it is not clear whether the Biden Administration is committed to serious global governance efforts in the G20.

All this raises a growing debate over the continued utility of the G20 as a critical global governance instrument. Pascal Lamy, the former Director General of the WTO is just one of many experts and in his case a former senior official that recognizes the crucial need to address the rising tide of global governance challenges. And he along with others he acknowledges the crucial importance of the G20. As Lamy wrote just recently:

> I believe the way forward to unlock the global governance gridlock requires improvements of the existing international framework. This is the triangle formed by the G20, the United Nations system and specialized international organizations. But for this approach to work, greater effort must be made to introduce the tools and benchmarks necessary to monitor organizational and institutional activities and to measure their successes, thereby improving their overall accountability.

Colin Bradford, long an observer and advocate for G20 leadership is even more pointed. Bradford sees no alternative to the G20 as the critical global governance institution. Moreover, he argues that the G20 provides the institutional setting to tackle and 'lower the temperature' in the increasingly tense US-China bilateral relationship. As he wrote (2022):

> … the logical next step in the process of unifying the world around civilized values and functional actions to deal with war and systemic crises at the same time, is for the G7 to "show up in force" at the G20 with ambition, quality representation and leadership ideas at the continuous range of official ministerial, working group, task force and Sherpa meetings that characterize the week-to-week preparations for G20 summits. … A joint decision now by all G7 members to ratchet up their presence and priorities in the G20 for the Indonesian and Indian G20 years this year and next and beyond, would signal a fresh effort by the West to engage with the rest of the world, including especially China, in professional working relationships to advance the global agenda, which requires intensity and unity.

The evidence seems clear. The commitment is what remains a question.

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