CIVIL SOCIETY AND WTO ACCOUNTABILITY

Annotated Bibliography

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May 2011

Prepared for the IISD-ENTWINED Workshop, Geneva, May 9, 2009. This project is supported by the ENTWINED research consortium, funded by the MISTRA Foundation of Sweden.

Looks at public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a new tool of global governance and their ability to be effective and legitimate. Aims: 1) to categorize the different partnerships and evaluate their legitimacy; and 2) to evaluate the accountability record in climate partnerships in terms of transparency, monitoring mechanisms, and stakeholder representation. Conceptualizes partnerships as networks and looks at three types: public-private (hybrid); governmental; and private-to-private. Argues that accountability is a central component of transnational legitimacy and that we need plural forms of accountability to evaluate networked climate governance. We need to look beyond principal-agent notions of accountability and examines the way that accountability functions in networks. Looks at three different models of multilateralism (multi-stakeholder multilateralism; market multilateralism; and elite multilateralism) and notes that each is associated with a certain type of partnership and has its own accountability challenges. A key question that arises from this is what standards of legitimacy and accountability to apply to the accountability of multiple sites of networked climate governance. Highlights some of the shortcomings of a focus on democratic legitimacy in a global PPP context.


Look at the source of legitimacy for global governance arrangements. Argue that global governance may be democratized by expanding participation and strengthening accountability. They note that global governance arrangements suffer from democratic deficits and examine the role of transnational actors as they may be able to make global governance more democratic. Analyze three components of global governance: 1) the design of international institutions; 2) public-private partnerships; and 3) transnational actors. There is a particular emphasis on the participation of global civil society actors. Examine the extent to which transnational actors live up to standards of inclusive participation and clear mechanisms of accountability. Note pitfalls in this respect but also highlight promising aspects of transnational civil society accountability, including accountability measures taken by some NGOs. Conclude that we need comparative empirical assessments of transnational actors and that the task of democratizing global governance through transnational actors is made difficult due to tradeoffs between different democratic values.


Examines mechanisms that aim to structure and enhance the relationship between the WTO and civil society. Looks at two interrelated dimensions of public participation: the transparency of an institution’s decision-making process and the engagement of non-state actors in decision-making processes. Develops a conceptual framework with four (interrelated) implementation parameters of public participation: the goal, the object, the mechanisms, and the actors. Finds the decisions that would require public participation (if the concern is with democratic legitimacy) are ones that are
almost exclusively reached by dispute settlement bodies. Argues that any steps taken toward institutionalizing greater public participation in the WTO should only happen after comprehensive reforms of the overall institutional structure of the WTO.


Looks at multiparty social action initiatives that seek solutions for complex, uncertain, and changing social problems. Argues that the most common conceptual models for understanding and ensuring accountability are not very helpful in organizing and governing such initiatives. Looks at two existing models—agency theory and representative theory—and details their drawbacks, which include the fact that they are focused on two party relationships (where representatives are accountable to constituents and agents are responsible to principals) that entail a negotiation of accountability. Then offers a third and more fruitful alternative: a model of mutual accountability that involves “many parties in poorly defined relationships” that tends to create multiple accountabilities. Discusses the advantages of multiparty initiatives and what is required to create accountability systems across diverse parties. Argues that the differences in the three accountability models suggest that they may be appropriate in different situations and that the appropriateness of accountability models may best be determined by situation rather than the origins of the parties.


Looks at the ways that NGOs use evaluation systems and examines how they can enable and constrain accountability. Notes that in the context of NGOs evaluative practices are often poorly understood and underutilized. Draws from interviews with NGOs and finds that there are significant variations in accountability systems. Argues that a contingent model of accountability is better able to respond to the range of NGO constituencies. Find that NGOs that are the least dependent on donor funding are the NGOs doing the most about evaluation.


Look at the accountability of international organizations. Examine governance and accountability in Regional Development Banks (RDB) in response to the small body of literature. Focus upon internal accountability and oversight, independent review mechanisms, and the role of civil society. Examine disclosure and civil society critiques. Note that the RDB’s information disclosure policies have been criticized by civil society organizations on the grounds that they do not share enough information. Argue that there ought to be an appeal mechanism at all RDBs that would allow civil society to challenge a bank’s decision to withhold information.

Note the critiques levied against the WTO and argues that it needs to increase its credibility, accountability, transparency, legitimacy and relevance. Details the problems in these areas and offers suggestions for improving the WTO’s Trade Policy Review Mechanism. Argues that we should open up the TPRM to civil society and that national governments should be encouraged to organize consultations on national trade policy with relevant stakeholders.


Ties together some of the questions that arise from debate on the legitimacy of IOs and private actors in the area of global climate governance. Links a discussion of NGO demands for representation and participation in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to an analysis of representation and participation within the NGO community. Details NGO responses to perceived participation and representation deficits in the climate convention and examines participation and representation within NGOs. Analyzes NGO submission documents from 2007-2009. Notes that NGOs have a potentially valuable role to play in strengthening the participation and representation of affected communities in international organizations and examines potential mechanisms that NGOs might use to do so. Notes that NGO’s procedural demands for equity tend to go hand in hand with their substantive demands (focuses on the former here). Finds that NGOs engaging with international organizations are contributing to their democratization and increasing IO accountability to the communities affected by their decisions. NGOs, however, still have a limited impact on concrete policy outcomes.


Looks at the challenges that NGOs face when they try to enhance organizational learning while maintaining accountability to donors. Finds that the ways that accountability is problematized affects the kinds of solutions that then emerge. Focuses on two main problematics: 1) myopia of accountability characterized by attention to short-term performance measurement rather than long-term social change and a focus on accountability to funders at the expense of accountabilities to clients and mission; and 2) logics of participation that tend to be compliance-driven and ritualistic rather than about increasing public accountability. Offers a practical review of how accountability systems might be constructed in broader systematic terms that promote critical reflection and learning within NGOs. Argues that we should place organizational learning, and evaluation in particular, at the core of a more reflective approach to accountability and that we need to conceptualize accountability as a system of relations that actors’ differential power and structural limitations on participatory voice. Argues that accountability, like power, is a relational concept and the effects of its mechanisms can thus only be understood when we place them in context and that reframing accountability as a system of relations requires looking at participatory mechanisms that are empowering rather than ritualistic and symbolic. Identifies seven factors that require future investigation: prioritization of accountabilities; perceptions about learning; perceptions about failure; organizational visions of the future; reporting and communication structures; job roles and incentives; and information systems. Offers propositions for all of these and notes that internal change in NGOs is a vehicle toward altering their interactions with external stakeholders.

Details three things that weaken accountability: 1) favouring vertical over horizontal accountability; having responsible agencies independent from central governments; and 3) requiring a high degree of specialist knowledge from those who participate. Examines what we can do to address these barriers and improve accountability. Pursues two strategies for strengthening accountability: 1) clearly internalizing accountability within governing institutions—what he calls “a logic of participation rather than a logic of compliance”; and 2) consolidating the emerging global financial public sphere. Here he argues that thinking about accountability in terms of participation and reciprocity requires a deeper foundation for participation.


Address the challenge of operationalizing accountability in order to achieve “genuine” accountability through an analysis of two cases of citizen activism in India. Take a different approach to remedying problems of horizontal and vertical accountability; notes that analysis of these occur independently of one another and argues that this approach has, unintentionally, “assigned” vertical and horizontal accountability systems and that this separate approach has its limitations. The case studies challenge the vertical-horizontal accountability dichotomy. Argue that these civic groups use a hybrid form of accountability that bridges the vertical-horizontal divide. They note one obstacle to this new hybrid form of accountability is the state’s tendency to offer civic groups opportunities for ex ante consultation as a substitute for the ability to engage in ex post accountability.


Looks at the effectiveness and sustainability of globally operating organizations (corporate; state and international; NGOs) and examines accountability in the relationship between organizations and those affected by their operations. The One World Trust’s Global Accountability Framework conceptualises accountability as a function of four key dimensions: transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response. Finds that while intergovernmental organisations do well overall in terms of policy and systems for evaluating their work, their transparency and response to stakeholder complaints is much weaker.


Detail key issues in the One World Trust study on accountability challenges in global climate governance. Argue that citizen calls for leadership on climate change issues are difficult due to poor
communication, that there is a discrepancy between available evidence and agreements people will reach, and that it is difficult for citizens to identify a locus of accountability.


Examines the measures necessary to ensure the accountability from IOs to their members and third parties. Notes three levels of IO accountability: 1) internal and external scrutiny and monitoring; 2) tortious liability; and 3) responsibility arising out of acts or omissions which do constitute a breach of a rule of law. All three levels are interrelated and mutually supportive. Looks at three required rules and practices (RRPs) between IOs and NGOs: Recommended Rules and Practices on the Relationship between NGOs and IOs: 1) establishing appropriate relationships; 2) establishing an NGO liaison service to facilitate NGO involvement; and 3) conduct briefings that allow NGO representatives to present their views. Discusses primary and secondary RRPs as they correspond with three levels of accountability and discusses remedies against IOs, where they focus on the implementation of the accountability regime and appropriate remedies for different levels of accountability. Details six general features of remedies against IOs. Finds that there is no necessary incompatibility between the autonomy necessary for IOs require and the requirements of an accountability regime.


Notes that accountability mechanisms typically applied to NGOs do not reflect the value-base of NGO activities and are perceived to be divorced from the mission of the organization and unable to capture their responsibility to a variety of stakeholders nor are they able to reflect the “complex web of relationships” NGOs are in. Asks how NGOs can reconcile their missions, values, and context with the top-down operational demands of accountability. Draws from an informal study of 12 NGOs, provides an overview of NGO accountability, and examines the purposes this accountability serves. Introduces a rights framework to NGO activities and examines the political context of defining NGO responsibilities. Argues that accountability can help to solidify rights. Reviews accountability mechanisms that take into account NGOs’ complex realities. Finds that solid NGO accountability mechanisms need to take rights and context into account and that developing a rights framework is important in terms of defining several aspects of accountability and to developing better accountability mechanisms.


Examines democratic accountability and the ways it is evaluated. Kahler examines two measures of accountability that have been applied to global institutions—those who argue for a democratic global polity and those (like Kahler) who argue for the delegation of authority from national governments to institutional agents. He looks at the criteria that accountability is weighed against and cautions against those who use “rigorous standards of democratic accountability” as a benchmark for evaluating international institutions,” arguing that this might not be the best measure. Argues that the accountability of GEMs can be enhanced by pursuing transparency, competition, and changes in rules of representation. He argues that accountability might be undermined in the
interest of pursuing a particular definition of democracy and that we need to pay more attention to the domestic bases of support for GEMs. Looks at the IMF and the WTO and at the WTO’s engagement with NGOs. Argues that the extent to which GEMs display accountability deficits they are likely to be due to decisions made by influential national governments and not because of dysfunctional international bureaucracies and notes the central role that governments play as gatekeepers.


Analyzes the results of a study of a large Bangladeshi NGO. Discusses the complex accountability problems the NGO faces and uses this case study to examine the cultural embeddedness of accountability systems. Argues that there is a need to link local and global agendas and constituencies within development work and notes that this increases the complexity of accountability pressures. Finds that NGO accountability can be only partly understood through analyzing the formal bureaucratic operation of organizational relationships and internal systems; accountability problems are not simply managerial or technical ones, but those that require analysis within a broader contextual framework. Argues that this accountability framework needs to take organizations’ positions within wider fields of power and social networks into account.


Argues that NGOs make an important contribution to international trade politics. Focuses on nonprofit advocacy groups that attempt to reform the WTO and looks at two NGO campaigns that attempted to limit the authority of the WTO in relation to developing states. Argues that these cases (access to medicine and investment negotiations) highlight lessons for NGO involvement with the WTO; NGOs are able to exert agenda-setting influence at the WTO, and in some cases, affect the outcomes of negotiations, but to do so they need to utilize political opportunities, mobilize normative consensus, and take state interests into account.


Examines the politics of accountability through an analysis of climate change. Argues that accountability is central to the study of global environmental politics because it 1) helps us to understand power and the division of rights and responsibilities; 2) gives us a vocabulary for thinking about liability and redress; and 3) highlights procedural democratic deficits as it highlights questions of representation and participation. Newell uses the lens of accountability to look at civil society group engagement with global actors and to examine the ways their strategies shift (and why). Identifies two main approaches to accountability: groups that aim to increase answerability for actions and those that pursue enforceability when there is a failure to deliver on obligations and argues that these approaches highlight competing understandings and practices of accountability. He analyzes both traditional methods aimed to increase public accountability and at the more recent role of corporate accountability aimed at promoting “civil regulation”—civil society based regulation of the private sector. The discussion of civil regulation addresses shareholder activism, corporate
accountability movements, and civil society accountability. Argues that we can gain traction by thinking about inter-regime relations in terms of competing accountabilities. Ends with a discussion of the possibilities and limitations of civil society actors as they take on these accountability roles and notes that civil society groups have been successful in increasing democratic accountability.


In light of the increasing demand for democratic legitimacy Piewitt examines civil society inclusion as a way to enhance the transparency and accountability of the international trade regime. Identifies two obstacles to the inclusiveness of global civil society in international organizations and examines the extent to which these obstacles are present with the WTO. Does this by analyzing the sectoral and regional distribution of CSOs that have participated in WTO public outreach programs in a 10-year timespan. Applies a typology of CSOs to do so. Examines the institutional and legal framework of civil society participation in the WTO. Looks at participation at Ministerial conferences in terms of the north-south divide and finds that it can be mitigated but not eliminated by global venue rotation. Finds that the individual exchange of information is important for NGOs.


Notes that transnational non-governmental organizations contain important analytical challenges for our understanding of accountability. Asks how transnational NGOs hold others and themselves accountable as well as whom they hold accountable. Draws from Grant and Keohane’s (2005) seven accountability mechanisms to do so, and notes several important limitations. Also offers an empirical analysis is based on data drawn from 152 in-depth interviews with leaders of transnational NGOs. Assesses how transnational NGO leaders perceive accountability and finds that transnational NGO leaders develop views as accountability subject and accountability holders—an important analytical distinction. Finds that some mechanisms are increasingly constraining as organizations are stronger while some constraints have a weak influence upon already weak organizations. Argues that the reputational mechanism is one of the main constraining mechanisms on transnational NGOs and that the peer mechanism appears to be a weak constraint on them.


Examine the varying institutional structures and accountability mechanisms of transnational NGOs; noting how the different perceptions affect behaviour and incentives they examine the ways that leaders of TNGOs discuss core challenges of governance and accountability. Approach decision-making processes and organizational constraints from an analysis of 152 semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, as well as financial and organizational data. Use this data to identify the main themes relating to governance, as highlighted by the respondents, and to detail how organizational structure and change intersect with accountability. Argue that the study of transnational NGO leaders’ views about governance and accountability provides new insights into
ongoing debates about global governance. Find that accountability is central to structuring decisions about governance.


Looks at civil society’s contributions to increasing accountability. Notes that existing contributions in this respect are disproportionate in terms of constituents in the global north and south. Argues that in order to acquire that greater effectiveness and legitimacy, global governance has to become more accountable. Suggests several institutional reforms, including greater allocation of funds for relations with CSOs; databases of relevant CSOs; improving the staff for CSO liaison; better guidance and training on relations with CSOs; clearer and more substantial incentives to engage with civil society; promoting relations with CSOs; and cultivating positive institutional attitudes towards civil society.


The aim of the book is to elaborate a conceptualisation of global governance, accountability, and civil society, and to relate this analytical framework to thirteen arrangements for transplanetary regulation. Evidence from the thirteen case studies in this book indicates that the general picture on delivering accountability is poor. Asks to what extent civil society engagement can answer accountability deficits in contemporary global governance. Notes that due to the release of more documentation and public information operations more people are more aware of the nature and significance of global regulatory apparatuses in contemporary society; however, argues that CSOs have done little to address issues of meaningful transparency. Argues that civil society matters for democratic accountability in contemporary global governance, but notes that accountability is not an unproblematic good and that the overall extent of civil society influence on democratic accountability in global governance must not be overestimated. Argues that it is always necessary to ask “accountability for whom” and “accountability for what purpose.” Also looks at the accountability of civil society organizations and finds that the record here is as mixed as the record on accountability in global governance.


Examines the relationship between civil society and accountability in global governance. Sets out a framework of analysis for the following case studies on a variety of global regulatory institutions. Argues that global governance institutions are accountable to the extent that it is transparent to those affected, consults those affected, reports to those affected and provides redress to those who are adversely affected. Notes that all case studies examine the ways and to what extents civil society activities advance these four aspects of accountability. Discusses global governance as “a complex of rules and regulatory institutions that apply to transplanetary jurisdictions and constituencies” and sets out six different types of global regulatory bodies (intergovernmental, transgovernmental,
interregional, translocal, private, and public-private hybrids). Views accountability as a process and examines the shortcomings of accountability in terms of global governance and argues that these pose a major challenge to delivering (effective and legitimate public policy. Emphasizes democratic accountability. Sets out contrasting definitions of civil society and asks if civil society activities can increase levels of global governance accountability and facilitate substantial redistributions of global governance accountabilities towards less privileged countries.


Examines the central role that NGOs played in the campaign to ban conflict diamonds. Argues that the greatest NGO contribution was their continuing pressure on governments and the industry to act quickly and decisively. Details conflicts between NGOs and other parties as well as how they were resolved. Highlights three main accountability issues in the Kimberley Process: 1) the power of mutual accountability arrangements; the role of traditional forms of accountability; and 3) NGO legitimacy and representation regarding their presence in governmental and private sector affairs.


Noting that the problem of cultural diversity is a multilayered, polycentric problem that can (correctly) be described in many ways, Smith focuses on one description: that our cultural values shape how we see any subject and affects regulatory responses and the construction of rules. Argues that disagreements between the WTO negotiators on the Doha Development Round agenda topics are inevitable because people perceive the subject, rules, and amendments differently and that culture is important to all aspects of international trade regulation. Notes three ways that WTO rules on international agricultural trade are viewed—1) as reductions in trade barriers/fiscal cuts; 2) in terms of special and differential treatment; and 3) in terms of trade/non-trade concerns—and argues that even when these categories and their rankings are accepted, disagreements about the scope of the disagreement are what create difficulties in multilateral agreements. Draws from Fuller’s discussion of the polycentric problem as a spider web and argues that the paths people choose are not neutral, but influenced by cultural ideas (that change over time); maps the three interpretations of the agricultural problem onto this and illustrated additional “strands” to underscore the complexity of the polycentric problem and to highlight the problems of placing a regulatory structure on top of a polycentric problem—a static “snapshot” that “becomes part of the problem and not the solution to it.”


Notes that the understanding of the term accountability is more limited than its use and argues that we need to clarify the conceptual foundations of the term. This should include the extent to which accountability facilitates democracy and how we might be able to improve the practice of accountability. This is part of a research project on “Exploring and Analyzing the Role of Accountability in Global Governance” that seeks to develop a “pluralistic system of accountability.”
Discusses the impact of partnerships on governments and international institutions as well as NGOs and other civil society organizations. Argues that it is crucial to focus on partnership accountability and to define the “right” levels and mechanisms of accountability and notes that this will vary for different partnerships. Details what accountability means when applied to partnerships and focuses upon who is accountable, to whom, for what, and how accountability is created and strengthened. Discusses the accountability relationship between partners, as well as the way that the partnership structure can affect the accountability (and reputation) of individual partners. Concludes that partnerships can be effective governance tools because they have the potential to reconcile conflicting interests in areas where enforcement mechanisms are weak. Need to look for the right level of accountability, not the most accountability.


Argues that the key problem affecting international governance is not a lack of accountability in the managerial sense, but a lack of accountability to the wider public; this problem of public accountability that lies at the core of the democratic deficit of international governance. Notes that an understanding of “public accountability” as it includes opportunities for citizens to monitor and engage in debate is on the decline, with talk of stakeholders replacing talk of citizens. The article responds to this and makes a strong case for the “public” in public accountability. Discusses the definitional struggle over the concept and argues that 1) the stakeholder concept; (2) the principal-agent framing; and (3) the view of public accountability as an umbrella concept are undermining the traditional view of public accountability as democratic accountability. Argues that public accountability should always mean direct accountability to citizens; public accountability is a specific type of accountability relationship that functions through critical debate in the public sphere and contributes to the broader task of democratic accountability. The public sphere that is necessary for this requires 1) a functioning media infrastructure, and 2) a transnational civil society. Democratic mechanisms of accountability are electoral, legal, and public (which includes the role of NGOs).


Draws on previous research data in order to examine why participatory arrangements between CSOs and IOs emerged. Concentrate on data that deal with the conditions of access CSOs have to the policy-making process of international organizations. Begins with the hypothesis that the institutionalization or cooperation between IOs and non-state actors is determined by the benefits that both sides, but in particular IOs, expect. Finds that the more an IO is forced to act in a local context, the more it seeks to influence human behaviour in that context and the more likely it is to interact with organized civil society. Notes that IO-CSO collaboration is essentially about bridging the gap between the global and the local level. Compares the empirical evidence from four international policy fields with theory-guided expectations and identifies four possible situations where an IO might be particularly interested in cooperating with non-state actors: 1) pinpointing new political issues or technological problems that need to be dealt with; 2) acquiring additional expertise to formulate policies; 3) implementing policies; and 4) evaluating the success of its policies and monitoring member state compliance with its treaties. Finds that there is a persistent variation of participation across policy fields.

Proposes three analytical approaches to transnational access to IOs: 1) rational choice institutionalism, which privileges concerns about functional efficiency; 2) sociological institutionalism, which privileges concerns about democratic legitimacy; and 3) power-oriented institutionalism, which privileges concerns about power implications. Within this, sets out a series of theories and hypotheses. Argues for engaging in theoretical dialogue and outlines three alternative models for this: 1) competitive testing of hypotheses; 2) additive explanatory power; and 3) complementary domains of application (or the “domain-of-application” approach). Undertakes this analysis in order to set the ground for systematic research on transnational access. Finds that the three approaches have comparative advantages in terms of accounting for variation across different dimensions. Suggests that changing norms of legitimate global governance best explain why international institutions have opened up to civil society actors, and that differences in the functional benefits that TNAs offer may account for patterns of variation across international institutions.


Assess the empirical viability of the normative vision to democratize existing institutional arrangements through the involvement of civil society actors. Their aim is to advance a new agenda in research on global democracy; in doing so they look at the empirical preconditions of alternative theoretical models. They focus on existing patterns of participation and accountability and the implications these have for the normative vision of “democratic polycentrism.” Noting that existing empirical patterns in global governance are problematic they outline four causes for concern: the question of who gets to participate; where in global governance CSOs get to participate; when CSOs get to participate; and how CSOs get to participate. Argue that civil society actors are well-situated to contribute to the development of democratic polycentrism. Draw upon primary empirical observations and secondary sources in order to map patterns of civil society involvement in global governance and look at mechanisms that CSOs can use to hold states and international institutions accountable for their decisions (judicial access; monitoring state commitments; and policy evaluation) and argue that external accountability to civil society actors may constructively supplement chains of internal accountability within international institutions. Also examine whether civil society actors themselves live up to standards of participation and accountability. Find that existing procedures and practices fail to meet normative criteria of democratic polycentrism; they may, however, be a step in a long-term process of this kind of democratization.


Examines a new form of governance that achieves public ends through private contracting. Notes that NGOs are using consumer pressure to demand that corporations engage in private regulation and argues that networks of private contracts are an integral part of an emerging global environmental governance regime. Looks at the extent and influence of the private environmental contracting that emerged in the regulatory gap created by shifts in global trade production. Looks at
the role of NGOs as corporations adopt environmental standards and examines the accountability of NGOs. Analyzes the accountability of exporting firms to the customers of the importing firm using three criteria (coercion, transparency, and participation). Examines whether private contracting can satisfy democratic concerns for efficacy and accountability. Notes the potential problems, some of which are significant, but argues that private environmental contracting “may be the only viable means to fill important gaps in the regulatory regime.”


Examines four main arguments for and against NGO involvement in the WTO. Addresses the grounds for NGO involvement in the WTO and the kinds of involvement the WTO provides for. Van den Bossche also examines four arguments against this involvement. Details the historical and legal history of the relationship between the WTO and NGOs, including in-depth details of policies, documents, and reports, and compares this relationship to the relationship that NGOs have with the UN. Notes that there is “a significant difference in how the United Nations and the WTO approach engagement with NGOs” and that the UN “has seized the opportunity to provide for forms of significant involvement of NGOs.” Examines the practice of WTO engagement with NGOs, including well-established practices, and notes the significant difference between formal provisions for involvement and what actually happens. Argues that “largely due to the efforts of the WTO Secretariat, the relations between the WTO and NGOs are currently more meaningful, more constructive, and less antagonistic than ever before” and that “the Sutherland Report shows a regrettable lack of ambition in the area of dialogue with civil society” and that “the WTO can, and should, engage with NGOs, and allow for NGO involvement, more than it currently does.”


Examines mechanisms for ensuring IO accountability. Noting that major IOs tend to focus on transparency and governance, she examines a “third leg” of accountability: performance evaluation. Weaver offers an explanation for the dual roles of independent evaluation in IOs—what she argues to be a paradox of accountability and examines these issues through a case study of the creation and evolution of the IMF’s independent evaluation office (IEO). This case study highlights four key challenges in the design of effective evaluation. One “surprising” finding is the strength and influence of the Fund’s IEO, something that Weaver argues may have “highly relevant implications for the design and reform of other performance evaluation units in international organizations.” The specific impact, however, is unclear: Weaver notes the potential for improved accountability and effectiveness that can come with organizational learning and change, yet she notes the potential danger of a backlash if independent evaluation findings undermine the credibility and authority of the IMF.


The book responds to questions of accountability and has two primary objectives: 1) to problematize accountability: “to understand the concept and its applications without taking
prototypical normative assumptions for granted,” and 2) “to observe accountability as a form of participatory praxis, and thus to identify its impacts on social relations and configurations of power.”

Note that the book does not offer an all-encompassing and rationalist accountability framework. Instead, they find that accountability is multileveled, pluralistic, and has a contested terrain and the chapters show that accountability defies broad generalizations and universal theorizing. Despite this they draw cautious conclusions from the different accountability frameworks.


Examines the role of accountability in the context of problems with foreign aid funding delivery. Looks at end-user monitoring of foreign aid projects and argues that international donors should be accountable to countries and citizens that receive aid. Reviews current understandings of accountability relationships in foreign aid and argues that foreign aid accomplishes more where there is more accountability. Looks at participatory and non-participatory mechanisms that might lead to accountability in development projects and argues that accountability is enhanced when more participatory elements are introduced to aid projects. Details five accountability relationships that may impact the overall success of foreign aid: 1) implementing agencies to end users; 2) implementing agencies to governments; 3) governments to end users; 4) governments to donors; and 5) donors to governments and end users. Looks at the role that NGOs play in this process. Notes that it is difficult to create true donor accountability in the foreign aid process.


Examines accountability in the WTO—an organization that has numerous “accountability regimes.” Argues that multiple accountabilities creates a polycentric problem and suggests that WTO might face an accountability trilemma where efforts to enhance one aspect of accountability might undermine others. Notes that without conceptual clarity we risk conflating accountability for doing the right thing with achieving the right thing. Also notes that accountability might also be harmful if principals make demands of agents that are beyond the scope of the WTO. Applies an analytic framework developed by Jerry Mashaw to examine accountability mechanisms. Argues that examining who is accountable at WTO depends on knowing why we ask about accountability in the first place. Develops an analytic framework identifying the variety of accountability regimes that function in the WTO.


Notes that international institutions are facing a double challenge of effectiveness and legitimacy that arises from increasing responsibilities and inadequate respect, support, and compliance from member states. Examines the principles that underlie current attempts to enhance and strengthen international institutions. Discusses the growing disaffection with multilateral organizations and examines how the twin challenges of improving effectiveness and legitimacy are affected by independence, participation, enhanced transparency, and enhanced accountability. Details the limitations on judicial style accountability and argues that we need to be careful when discussing
NGOs inclusion because there is a risk of this further distorting the under-representation of developing countries. Argues that new forms of accountability could usefully expand the scope for holding decision-makers in global governance collectively to account if they recognize the rights of minority and developing country shareholders.