

# Accountability and Abuses of Power in World Politics

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TABLE 1. Two General Models of Accountability for Nation-States		
Power-Wielders Regarded as	Who Is Entitled to Hold the Powerful Accountable?	
	<i>Those Affected by Their Actions—Participation</i>	<i>Those Entrusting Them with Powers—Delegation</i>
<i>Instrumental agents</i>	Ia. <b>“Direct democracy”</b> : Actions of power-wielders are what those affected (the people) instructed them to do in this contingency.	Ila. <b>Principal-Agent</b> : Power-wielders act as faithful agents of principals who empower them.
<i>Discretionary authorities</i>	Ib. <b>Populist</b> : Policies followed by the power-wielders lead to outcomes approved by those affected, which leads those affected to confer additional powers.	Ilb. <b>Trustee</b> : Power-wielders perform the duties of their offices faithfully.

TABLE 2. Seven Mechanisms of Accountability in World Politics				
Mechanism	Accountability Holder	Power-Wielder	Cost to Power-Wielder	Example
Hierarchical	Leaders of organization	Subordinate official	Loss of career opportunities	Authority of UN Secretary-General
Supervisory	States	Multilateral organization and	Restraints on ability to act, loss of office	World Bank and IMF governance by their executive boards
Fiscal	Funding agencies	Funded agency	Budget restrictions	Withholding of UN dues its executive head
Legal	Courts	Individual official or agency	From restriction of authority to criminal penalties	International Criminal Court
Market	Equity- and bond-holders and consumers	Firm	Loss of access to, or higher cost of, capital	Refusal of capital markets to finance developing country governments during world financial crises
Peer	Peer organizations	Organizations and their leaders	Effects on network ties and therefore on others' support	Independent marine certification body's evaluation of the Greenpeace-Shell controversy
Public reputational <sup>a</sup>	Peers and diffuse public	Individual or agency	Diffuse effects on reputation, prestige, self-esteem	Effects on U.S. “soft power” of unilateralism

<sup>a</sup> Reputational effects are involved in all issues of accountability, as mechanisms leading to punishment through hierarchy, supervision, fiscal measures, legal action, the market, and peer responses. The category of public reputational effects refers to situations where the other means of accountability are not available, but reputational effects are widely known and significant.

**TABLE 3. Power Wielders and Constraints**

Power-Wielder	Relevant International and Transnational Accountability Mechanisms	Strength of Constraints
Multilateral organization	Delegated and participatory: Supervisory, fiscal, hierarchical, reputational	Strong
NGOs	Mostly participatory: Peer, reputational, market	Strong when NGO is weak; weaker when NGO is strong
Transgovernmental networks	Mostly participatory: Peer	Quite weak; more a matter of negotiation constraints
Firms	Mostly participatory: Market, reputational	Stronger for brand-name firms in consumer markets and media firms than for more anonymous firms
States	External accountability mostly participatory: Peer, reputational Delegated accountability (supervisory and fiscal) only for weak, dependent states who have accepted supervision as a condition for support	Varies with state power and degree of interdependence. For relatively powerful states, negotiation constraints are more important than accountability mechanisms.