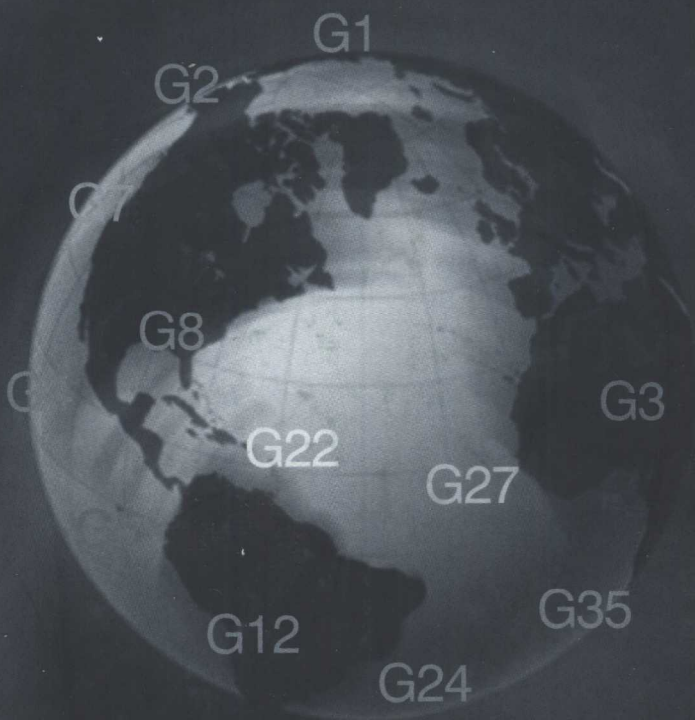


THE G8 AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE SERIES



Ashgate



# The G7/G8 System

Evolution, role and  
documentation

Peter I. Hajnal

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Evolution, role and documentation

PETER I. HAJNAL

*University of Toronto*

With a contribution by Sian Meikle, University of Toronto

## Ashgate

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# Foreword

*by Sir Nicholas Bayne*

The G7—now G8—is an institution. It brings together the governments of the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Canada (the original seven powers) with the European Union (Commission and Presidency) and most recently Russia. It embodies both an annual summit and a proliferation of other meetings, ministerial or official, regular or occasional, avowed or unpublicised. But it is not an organisation. It does not have a charter, a headquarters or a secretariat, let alone a cafeteria or a pension plan, both identified by the late Dr Michael Hodges as vital signs of an organisation.

Most important, the G7/G8 does not have a public relations department, an information service or a web site. Other institutions—the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the OECD—are prodigal in the information they disseminate. The G7/G8 is secretive and unforthcoming, apart from agreed communiqués and other documents which issue from its meetings. True, each time a G8 member hosts a summit or similar meeting, it produces extensive briefing material and, these days, creates a web site. Other G8 members may do the same, even if not hosts. But all this material has national origins and—inevitably—a national bias. There is no collective information effort. Nothing is done for those curious about the G7/G8 itself, whether journalists, academic researchers, non-G8 governments or the general public. In some ways the G7/G8 has even gone backwards. Originally the G7 heads of government all took part in the concluding press conference. Now they brief separately, leaving only the host to present the final declaration.

How, then, can anyone find out about the G7/G8? Fortunately, since 1988, the University of Toronto G7, now G8, Research Group has been filling the gap left by the G7/G8 itself. Over the last ten years it has built up, with the implicit encouragement of the G7/G8 governments, a comprehensive archive in both written and electronic form and a body of analytical work accessible to scholars and the general reader alike.

Peter Hajnal is the librarian and bibliographer of the Research Group. He has an encyclopaedic command of this material. From it he has created, in this volume, the first guide-book or manual to the G7/G8. He

explains how it started, who takes part and how it works. He traces its development from a single annual summit, prepared by quasi-independent sherpas, to the present intricate network of ministerial conferences, specialised meetings, working groups and task forces; from a limited list of economic themes to an agenda open to every possible international topic; from the two-page statement produced at the first summit at Rambouillet in 1975 (President Giscard resisted even this) to the hundreds of pages issued by G7/G8 meetings in 1998, even though the actual summit documents were half the length of previous years. Peter Hajnal has the skill and experience needed to guide us through this labyrinthine documentation. This extends beyond the papers issued by the G7/G8 itself to wider analytical writings about it; and his book concludes with a thorough bibliography.

Sian Meikle, the University of Toronto Library's web development co-ordinator and the author of Chapter 11 of this book, has been instrumental in designing and developing the G8 Information Centre web site in co-operation with the G8 Research Group. Her survey of internet resources of G7/G8 information, along with her thorough analysis of the patterns of use of the Information Centre, form a most valuable component of this guide.

Peter Hajnal possesses what Thomas Carlyle called "transcendent capacity of taking trouble". He has taken immense trouble to make this guide reliable and definitive. It is comprehensive in coverage, precise in accuracy, meticulous in attention to detail, judicious in interpretation. Anyone who is curious about the G7/G8, puzzled by its statements or baffled by its workings, will find this book an indispensable source of instruction.

# Preface

This study is based on the assumption that the G7/G8 is one of the central international institutions of the 1990s and, potentially, of the twenty-first century. Notwithstanding serious criticism of its institutional growth, proliferating agenda and lack of representativeness, the G7/G8 has achieved more than some critics would have us believe, and has been able to secure a significant degree of compliance from its members on a number of issues. It has also served as an effective means of socialising the leaders and ministers of member states, enabling them to get well-acquainted with one another and to understand one another's domestic political and economic constraints, and providing them with a means of policy coordination. Questions remain, however, about the effectiveness of the G7/G8 in changing the behaviour of non-member states and multilateral institutions, and in improving broader global conditions.

The purpose of this work is to discuss the origins, characteristics, role and agenda of the G7/G8 system; to review its evolution; and to provide a detailed study of its complex and elusive documentation.\*

Chapter 1 introduces the G7/G8 as an international institution, reviews its origins and role, surveys the major debates and questions about it in the scholarly literature, and discusses proposals and initiatives for reforming the G7/G8. Chapter 2 reviews the summit meetings from the inception of the G7 in 1975 through the 1998 Birmingham Summit, highlighting the milestones in summit history. Chapter 3 discusses questions of G7/G8 membership and the major players, with a more detailed treatment

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\* Earlier, shorter versions of this work appeared as "The G7" in *International Information: Documents, Publications and Electronic Information of International Governmental Organizations*, 2nd ed., 202-40, edited by Peter I. Hajnal (Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1997); *From G7 to G8: Evolution, Role and Documentation of a Unique Institution* (New York: Columbia International Affairs Online, Columbia University Press, 1998; URL: <https://www.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/book/hajnal/index.html>); and "The Documentation of the G7/G8 System," *G7 Governance*, No. 4 (June 1998); URL: [www.library.utoronto.ca/www/g7/governance/gov4/index.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/www/g7/governance/gov4/index.html).

of Russian membership and potential further evolution of the institution.

The subject of Chapter 4 is the larger G7/G8 system, with the increasingly complex network of ministerial meetings, the sherpas, and various task forces and expert groups. The G7/G8 system does not function in a vacuum: Chapter 5 explores the nature of its relationship with other international organisations and fora. Chapter 6 presents an overview of the changing summit agenda; and Chapter 7 is a survey of studies evaluating the results of the summits both in terms of co-operative agreements reached and compliance with summit undertakings.

Chapter 8 surveys the evolving documentation of the G7/G8 system, examining the types, characteristics, subject matter, production and dissemination of documents as well as their importance. Chapter 9 is a systematic assessment of the documentation as seen by a number of analysts and observers. Going beyond official documents, Chapter 10 discusses briefly the major sources of additional information, notably archives and writings about the G7/G8 and related issues. Chapter 11, written by Sian Meikle, examines and evaluates internet resources, with emphasis on the web site of the G8 Information Centre at the University of Toronto.

It is hoped that this study, along with the accompanying comprehensive bibliography, will add something of value to the scholarly literature and will serve as a useful work of reference for academics, government officials, the news media, libraries and the general public.

Peter I. Hajnal



# Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and suggestions of Sir Nicholas Bayne, former British High Commissioner in Canada (now with British Invisibles and the London School of Economics and Political Science); Dr Sylvia Ostry, Professor John Kirton, Professor Louis Pauly and Dr Eleonore Kokotsis of the University of Toronto; Laurette Glasgow, Michael Rooney, Janet Gompf and Kimberly Phillips of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; David Malone of the International Peace Academy (formerly with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade), and Professor George M. von Furstenberg of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. I am grateful to my colleague Sian Meikle, web development co-ordinator at the University of Toronto Library, for contributing an important and excellent chapter, and for her assistance in overcoming technical obstacles while preparing the text. I also thank Marc Lalonde of the University of Toronto Library for his technical help. My gratitude is due to the Centre for International Studies of the University of Toronto for providing space and many kinds of support. For their very able and dedicated research and editorial assistance I thank Edna Hajnal, Katrina Švihran, Karen Van Der Zon, Barbara Vasa and Audrey Malloch. Last but certainly not least, I thank Kirstin Howgate and her colleagues at Ashgate for encouraging and helping along the preparation of the manuscript for publication. All of them contributed significantly to making this a better book. Any omissions or inaccuracies are my sole responsibility.

Peter I. Hajnal

# List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community (-ies)
ECB	European Central Bank
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
EMU	European (Economic and) Monetary Union
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
G5	Group of Five
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
G10	Group of Ten
G15	Group of Fifteen
G22	Group of Twenty-two
GAB	General Arrangements to Borrow (IMF)
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC(s)	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI(s)	International Financial Institution(s)
IGO(s)	International Governmental Organisation(s)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOs	International Organisations
IOSCO	International Organization of Securities Commissions
ISPO	Information Society Project Office (EU)
MARIS	Maritime Information Society

MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (weapons)
ODC	Overseas Development Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
P8	Political 8 (G7 + Russia)
PHARE	Assistance for Economic Restructuring in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe
Quad	Trade Ministers Quadrilateral (US, Canada, Japan, EU)
SDR	Special Drawing Rights (IMF)
SIG	(G7) Support Implementation Group
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TOES	The Other Economic Summit
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on AIDS/HIV
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
Unesco	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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# 1 The G7/G8 as an International Institution

The Group of Seven/Group of Eight (G7/G8) is an unorthodox international institution. To place it in context, it is useful to recall that the authoritative *Yearbook of International Organizations* defines international governmental organisations (IGOs) as bodies that are "based on a formal instrument of agreement between the governments of nation states; ... includ[e] three or more nation states as parties to the agreement; ... [and have] a permanent secretariat performing ongoing tasks".<sup>1</sup> The G7/G8 is a less structured international arrangement; it was not established by formal international agreement, and it has no secretariat. The British government, prior to hosting the 1998 Birmingham Summit, characterised the G8 as "an informal organisation, with no rules or permanent Secretariat staff".<sup>2</sup> The group's relative informality and the fact that it is relatively unencumbered by bureaucracy have enabled the leaders of these countries to get to know one another and to understand one another's domestic political and economic constraints. It has also given them a forum and venue for policy co-ordination.

Occasional proposals to establish some form of permanent, continuing machinery have met with stiff resistance from at least some members. Nonetheless, the G7/G8 has become a most important actor on the international scene and has evolved into what may be termed the G7/G8 system. The best-known part of that system is the series of annual meetings of heads of state or government. These annual summit meetings are covered in great detail—albeit unevenly—by the news media and increasingly by scholarly and other specialised writing, but the resulting documentation is not widely understood. This work explores the context and the nature of that documentation.

The term G7, and now G8, has come to predominate as the name of the annual series of summit meetings. Earlier it was called the economic summit, the summit of industrialised countries, the Western economic summit, and the seven-power summit. None of these names is totally accurate: