

The G20's Growing Legitimacy

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Introduction

Since the start of Group of Twenty (G20) governance in 1999 and especially since its rise to the leaders' level in 2008, the G20 has faced charges that it is an illegitimate centre of global governance, however timely, well tailored and effective its performance might be (Kirton 2013) (see Appendix A). The basic charge is that the G20 is a self-selected, arbitrary group of big powers from the global elite of states, with no legal foundation or broader constituency of states from which its mandate and ultimate accountability derives.

In recent years, a newer, broader, deeper criticism has emerged. The current crisis of the liberal multilateral order itself is said to be a crisis of legitimacy in the defining institutions and ideas of global governance, under assault from the rising protectionism, populism, nativism and isolationism within Westphalian states. To be sure, only in the leading Anglophone, Atlantic powers of the United Kingdom and the United States have these anti-elitism forces prevailed, and there only narrowly, in the referendum for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States.

Still, the concerns and resulting crisis of confidence are sufficiently serious to warrant a serious effort to answer two questions: first, how legitimate is the G20 as the centre of global governance now and, second, how can G20 legitimacy be improved.

The Debate among Competing Schools of Thought

These questions have long inspired a scholarly debate among several competing schools of thought.

The first school sees the G20 summit as an illegitimate global governance forum. Anders Åslund (2009) after the 2009 Pittsburgh Summit doubted the legitimacy of a G20 institution, in his view, had that arrogantly named itself the premier economic forum, without having clear criteria for membership, agreed rules of governance or authorization from anyone else. He proposed in its place a reliance on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), since it had the needed universality, hard legal status and staff. The G20 would be left to work as an informal "consultative forum" at best. Many traditional, "hard law" multilateralists, especially those associated with or sympathetic to the IMF or United Nations, shared this view (Strauss-Kahn 2013; Gilman 2015).

The second school sees G20 illegitimacy due to a membership that is arbitrary, small and rich. David Shorr and Thomas Wright (2010) questioned the legitimacy of a group with an "arbitrary" membership, and the accusations of "global economic apartheid" that could arise. Anthony Payne (2010) also wondered how the G20 would work well with the "marginalized majority" left out.

The third school calls for reform to secure legitimacy. It rejected the existing G20 but saw it as effective and legitimate if several changes were made (Ostry 2010).

The fourth school sees initial G20 legitimacy now gone, due to a once co-operative United States that disappeared with the Trump administration and a premature shift since 2011 in the G20's

approach toward fiscal and monetary normalization. Lawrence Summers (2019) argues that “this effort to bring the Group of Seven industrial economies together with a range of emerging markets to discuss economic and financial issues has become an accepted part of the international landscape, and it provides legitimacy that would otherwise be lacking for decisions regarding the future of international finance ... if the G-20's legitimacy is to be maintained, a future agenda needs to be more focused on interests of workers in Detroit and Dusseldorf and less the concerns of those who meet in Davos.”

Puzzles

Although these schools each offer valuable insights, they leave several puzzles to solve. First, most place heavy emphasis on the input legitimacy of membership, without offering any evidence or even convincing argumentation that more members, especially those of different kinds would enhance legitimacy. Second, others simply assert that legalization, agreed rules or governance, or a secretariat is required for legitimacy, and prefer the IMF — a body that was founded in and by a hegemonic United States that retains a veto over key decisions, that failed to prevent the Asian-turned-global financial crisis of 1997–1999, and that became a full member of the G20 along with its Bretton Woods twin, the World Bank Group. Only Summers (2019) points directly to the key component of inherent, constitutional legitimacy based on “the people” in where the G20's legitimacy ultimately rests. Yet none of these schools present an explicit, well-developed conception of legitimacy, nor do they systematically measure how the alleged components or causes of G20 legitimacy have grown or declined over all 14 of the G20 summits and the G20's 10 ministerial bodies that have arisen from the start of G20 governance in 2008 up to 2019 and those that lie ahead. This study takes up these tasks.

Thesis

This study argues that the G20 has had substantial and growing legitimacy since its start at the ministerial level in 1999 and especially at the summit level in 2008. The G20's substantial legitimacy throughout is grounded in its high inherent and constitutional legitimacy arising from the core characteristics of its composition, which well match the needs of a globalized 21st-century world. Its growing input, throughput and output legitimacy are seen in its increasing performance on the relevant dimensions of governance through to its Osaka Summit in June 2019 and the promising prospects for its next Riyadh Summit to be hosted by Saudi Arabia in November 2020. Yet there remains a need to strengthen G20 legitimacy, through several low-cost reforms under G20 leaders' direct control.

The Concept of Legitimacy

Analysis of the legitimacy of global governance institutions often begins with the pioneering concept and framework offered by Robert Keohane (2011). He defined legitimacy as “the right to rule,” rather than the rightness *from* or *of* the rule. He thus placed a premium on the input legitimacy of those actors with such a claim that were included in the institution, relative to those left outside. He continued by offering six standards to assess legitimacy, all flowing from liberal democratic principles.

Keohane's first standard is minimal moral responsibility, by not violating basic human rights.

The second is inclusiveness, by being “open to all peoples who are willing to participate in attaining the goals established by the institution” (Keohane 2011, 101).

The third is epistemic quality, with its two components of institutional integrity and transparency. Institutional integrity is the institution's performance being based on beliefs that are true rather than demonstrably false. Transparency, as a guarantee of institutional integrity, is the institution's actions being understood by outsiders based on information it makes accessible at reasonable cost.

The fourth standard is accountability. It “includes three elements: (1) standards that those who are held accountable are expected to meet; (2) information available to accountability-holders, who can then apply the standards in question to the performance of those who are held to account; and (3) the ability of these accountability-holders to impose sanctions: to attach costs to the failure to meet the standards” (Keohane 2011, 102).

The fifth standard is compatibility with democratic governance within countries, especially by enhancing democracy there.

The sixth is comparative benefit, producing “results that are better than those that alternative feasible institutional arrangements or their absence could create. Benefits can be substantive, such as security, welfare, or ecological quality. They can also be procedural, such as the ability to work with people from diverse societies, to solve problems cooperatively rather than coercively, and to create opportunities to learn new ways of thought” (Keohane 2011, 103).

These six standards reinforce the initial definitional emphasis on input legitimacy, notably through the second standard of inclusiveness, the transparency component of the third standard of epistemic quality and the fourth standard of accountability. Yet they include output legitimacy through the first standard of minimum moral responsibility, the fifth standard of enhancing democracy, and the sixth standard of comparative benefit. Throughput legitimacy is contained only in the third standard's component of institutional integrity.

The heavy emphasis on input legitimacy, through open-ended inclusiveness, neglects the fact that each individual on the planet, in their public as well as private life, has a privacy right or even obligation to meet with others in groups that not everyone else on the planet has a right to attend. The emphasis on output legitimacy conflates legitimacy with performance effectiveness, without specifying the relationship between the two. It does not consider how effectiveness increases legitimacy and, conversely, how legitimacy increases effectiveness. Throughput legitimacy, appearing only as the truth of the institution's dominant beliefs, is reduced to a single component with an external referent, without specifying who or what the external referent is — who knows the truth and what it is.

The alternative formulation of legitimacy employed here would start with the foundational component of inherent or constitutional legitimacy. It defines legitimacy as the “rightness of the rule,” or its “rectitude” in the classic concept of regime theory codified by Stephen Krasner (1983) in 1983. Here liberal democracy and human rights may be only a single referent for rightness, and not the primary one now, when life on the planet is threatened by nuclear weapons and accidents and, above all, catastrophic climate change and its associated ecological threats. As the survival and well-being of all people on the planet are affected by these threats, an institution's inherent or constitutional legitimacy should be grounded in global governance in the name of the people, rather than the sovereign, territorial, exclusive states that have proliferated as the predominant political form in international politics and institutions since the treaties of Westphalia in 1648 (Oates 2017, forthcoming). While the UN charter may begin with the ringing words “we the people,” the remainder of the document affirms the ultimate rights of sovereign states. It does not recognize the value, or even the existence, of the natural environment, to this day.

Summers' (2019) standard for the G20's legitimacy also starts with the input legitimacy from bringing in emerging economies and the output legitimacy from solving the 2008 global financial crisis. But it then proceeds to the G20's inherent legitimacy grounded in the industrial, blue collar workers, rather than the global elite, from whom the G20's authority and legitimacy ultimately derive. It is a good, if incomplete, start.

Inherent, Constitutional Legitimacy

In this ultimate component of an institution's inherent and constitutional legitimacy, the G20 has high and growing legitimacy as measured in several ways.

It was conceived in the 1990s, not by a hegemonic United States alone, but by then U.S. treasury secretary Lawrence Summers and Canadian finance minister Paul Martin, to respond to global financial crises that began with the collapse of the Mexican peso in December 1994 (Keohane 1984; Kirton 2013). Martin and Summers defined its core institutional features when they met bilaterally at the U.S. Treasury building on April 24, 1999 (Kirton 2013; Summers 2019).

The G20 had clear, innovative membership criteria, centred on the new concept of “systemically significant states,” that was well designed for an already intensely interconnected and rapidly globalizing 21st-century world. In addition to the old criterion of relative capability used to define top-tier states and which states gained membership in the top-tier club, the new concept coequally added connectivity as a defining feature of the international system now. Thus states were chosen as G20 members if they had enough capability and connectivity to harm the entire global system should a financial crisis erupt at home and if they had enough capability and connectivity to be able and willing to ride to the rescue as providers of financial security in such a case.

These criteria guided who was chosen as members, with the older criteria of geographic representativeness and democratic character relegated to a secondary place. Thus the established Group of Seven (G7) powers were joined in the G20 by the big emerging powers soon self-defined and assembled as the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the MIKTA grouping of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia, along with Saudi Arabia and Argentina. Nigeria was selected as a member, but has never assumed its place.

Another innovation, relative to the G7 created in 1975 and including the regional European Union by 1981, was to add as full G20 members the multilateral IMF and the development-dedicated World Bank Group — international institutions that each included virtually all countries in the world.

Moreover, the G20 was created with the dual distinctive foundation mission of promoting financial stability and making globalization work for the benefit of all. The first mission was a global public good that benefits all countries and peoples in the world, above all the poorest who were most harmed by the Asian-turned-global financial crisis from 1997 to 1999. The second mission was an explicitly distributional or even redistributive mission, specifically directed at making globalization, then focused on finance and trade, work equally for the 1% at the bottom of the scale of income and wealth, as much as for the 1% at the top. Its focus was not on equality of opportunity but on equality of result.

The growth in the G20's inherent and constitutional legitimacy is seen in its increasing affirmations in its summit outcome documents of its foundational principles of financial stability and above all globalization for all (see Appendix A). In its principled and normative direction setting, its affirmations of financial stability and inclusive globalization both increased from 2008 to 2019. Notably, globalization for all has surpassed financial stability since 2013. These foundational principles have been increasingly used as an active guide of its performance at each summit in the G20 summit's specific commitments and to the work of its expanding ministerial forums.

Open democracy and human rights are the two distinctive foundational missions of the G7, rather than the G20. But as Keohane (2011) includes these principles among his six standards of legitimacy, it is useful to chart the G20's performance in this regard. Here the G20 has regularly affirmed these principles since its start, reaching a peak for each in 2016 when China hosted at Hangzhou and in 2017 when Germany hosted at Hamburg (see Appendix A).

The ultimate component of inherent-constitutional legitimacy as well as output legitimacy is distinctive mission done. On its first distinctive mission the G20 summit has increasingly produced financial stability. It first stopped the American-turned-global financial crisis from 2008 to 2009, then prevented the regional European crisis from going global from 2010 to 2012, and finally preventing either a global or regional financial crisis from erupting from 2013 to at least late October 2019.

The G20's record on its second distinctive mission producing globalization for all is more uncertain and complex. The uncertainty arises from the fact that the G20, backed by its Financial Stability Board (FSB), is arguably more relatively responsible and capable for promoting global financial stability than for making globalization work for all, even if the World Bank is a full founding member of the G20. There are also important conceptual and empirical issues about whether the proper measure should be economic income or wealth, or broader well-being, among countries or the people within.

In general terms, there is a consensus that economic equality among countries has increased since the G20 work began in 1999 and at the leaders' level in 2008. Economic equality increased between G7 and non-G7 members of the G20, has decreased among the most established G7 economies in the G20, and increased among many of the major emerging ones.

On broader measures of well-being, a useful indicator is the success of the United Nations in reaching its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 2000 to 2015, and then its broader, bigger, bolder 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) one third of the way into their schedule from 2015 to 2030. Here the eight MDGs, focused on the old, relatively easy development-focused targets, with health taking three of the eight, were largely met by 2015. None of the sustainability-focused SDGs is not on track by 2019 to be met by 2030. This is particularly true for the ecological sustainability goals, where seven of the 17 SDGs are focused and where globalization has become complete. On digitalization, where globalization has now reached over one half of the world's people, there are no SDGs at all.

Equitably and effectively governing ecological sustainability and digitization is thus the central challenge for the G20's legitimacy in the decade ahead.

Input Legitimacy

The G20's input legitimacy has also risen to substantial levels.

Membership has stayed the same at 19 countries, the European Union and the IMF and World Bank. No other country has emerged to meet the clear criteria of being a systemically significant state. Even Nigeria, the "missing member," probably does not meet those criteria in an era where oil is becoming a stranded asset. But it has a claim on the secondary criteria of geographic representativeness, as a second African member, and globally as another Muslim-majority state after Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The many non-members who have argued for admission, such as the Scandinavians and the Netherlands (which is a frequent guest at the summits), show by doing so that they consider the G20 to be a legitimate forum, or would be if they were admitted. Unlike the League of Nations or some UN functional organizations, no G20 member has withdrawn or even considered withdrawing from the group.

For guest country leaders invited to attend the summit, the G20 began with several and increased the number and diversity of them. The first summit had five country guests, with Spain subsequently coming to every one and thus claiming to be a member of the group. The other country guests have increasingly included smaller countries from various geographic regions, or those who chair inclusive regional organizations there.

The executive heads of international organizations invited and coming as guests to the G20 summits started with the secretary general of the United Nations, who has subsequently attended every one. The G20 in 2010 added the director general of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a multilateral body first founded in 1919 to represent workers. Along with the World Bank and the UN, it made three quarters of the multilateral organizations at the G20 summit dedicated to making globalization work for all.

The G20 has also increased the number and diversity of outsiders invited to its growing array of G20 ministerial meetings and official-level working groups (see Appendix B).

Beyond the state, the G20 has recognized a growing array of formal and informal civil society engagement groups (see Appendix C). They began in 2010 with the Business 20, concerned with financial stability, and equally, in the classic balancing formula from the ILO and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with the Labour 20 focused on making globalization work for more by bringing in the workers and their families. Since then the six new formal engagements groups and the three informal ones have included constituencies that are relatively dispossessed. None has focused on financial stability or the interests of economic elites. By involving ever more individuals, these engagement groups have brought more directly into G20 governance the “people,” from whom the G20's inherent constitutional legitimacy ultimately derives, rather than the states. The early evidence about the Think 20 suggests that such engagement groups do influence the work of the G20 leaders themselves (Kirton and Warren 2017, 2019; Hou and Tops 2019) (see Appendix D).

The attendance of the leaders of G20 members at the summit shows that they consider it to be a legitimate form, at least relative to the other demands they face at the same time at home. The G20 had a perfect attendance record at its first three summits, including at Pittsburgh in September 2009, when the leaders declared the G20 to be the permanent, primary forum for their international economic cooperation. It fell to 90% attendance at subsequent summits but rose to usually 95% since 2016. U.S. presidents, including Donald Trump, have chosen to attend every one, even as Trump sent his vice-president to represent him at a leaders' meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Vietnam in 2017.

Throughput Legitimacy

The G20 summit's throughput legitimacy has also risen to respectable levels.

A conclusive assessment requires a detailed knowledge of the private discussions and negotiating dynamics among the leaders and their sherpas at the summit themselves and in the lead-up (if only to see if what is said is heard and positions adjusted as a result). Yet the available evidence is sufficient to sustain this claim.

The increasing equality among members in hosting the summit and the commensurate increasing ability of the host to set the priorities and agenda show that the G20 is becoming a genuine club of equals. This is despite the large disparity in relative capability among the group's members, from the United States at the top to Argentina and South Africa at the bottom. Hosting began with the historic, hegemonic imperial powers of the United States at Washington DC in November 2008, then the United Kingdom at London in April 2009 and then the United States again in Pittsburgh in September 2009, making the United States the only member to have hosted the summit twice. After non-imperial Canada hosted at Toronto in June 2010, hosting passed to the non-G7, non-BRICS but OECD democracy of Korea at Seoul in November 2010. This started a rotation between G7 and non-G7 states, as it was followed by France at Cannes in November 2011, Mexico at Los Cabos in June 2012, Group of Eight and BRICS member Russia at St. Petersburg in September 2014, Australia at Brisbane in November 2014, and Turkey at Antalya in November 2015. China as host at Hangzhou in September 2016 became the first fully non-democratic member to host. It was followed

by Germany at Hamburg in July 2017, Argentina at Buenos Aires in November 2018 and Japan at Osaka in June 2019. Thus far only one fully non-democratic member has hosted one of the 14 G20 summits to date. The democratic bias in hosting is high.

These hosts have increasingly set priority themes and agendas that have expanded from economic subjects into social, ecological sustainability and security ones.

The summits have increasingly, if slowly, moved toward the standard set by Jürgen Habermas of giving every participant equal voice and letting the best argument win. At Washington in 2008, the longest intervention was made by the leader of one of the least power members, President Cristina Fernández Kirchner of Argentina. All leaders listened, but few thought hers was the best argument and it did not win.

The summit's move from leaders reading prepared speeches to one another in turn began at Los Cabos, when some leaders spontaneously discussed and agreed to actions that soon removed the leaders of Greece and Italy. At St. Petersburg in 2013, the leaders-only opening dinner was diverted at the last minute to focus on stopping the routine use of chemical weapons of mass destruction by the Assad regime in Syria. This intended result was quickly achieved.

G20 summits have increasingly featured on-site bilateral meetings where more spontaneous discussions can take place. The Trump-Xi dinner at Buenos Aires discussed opioids as well as trade.

Output Legitimacy

The output legitimacy of the G20 summit has also grown in many ways. It has done so even as the G20 has shifted its focus from financial crisis response to crisis prevention, from financial stability to globalization for all, from economic to social, ecological and security governance, and to more complex, even existential threats (Kirton 2017). It did so despite the arrival of a Brexiting Britain and a nationalist, populist, protectionist president of the United States.

The greatest achievements came on the G20's first mission of promoting financial stability, in ways that activated its membership criteria and inherent equality to a high degree. At the ministerial level, since its start in 1999, the G20 prevented another global financial crisis from arising for a decade, until the bigger, faster, broader one erupted with the American-turned-global financial crisis in September 2008. The latter brought the first great role reversal, as the providers of financial security in the Asian-turned-global financial crisis now became the consumers of financial security in this bigger, American-initiated one. After G20 leaders successfully quelled this 2008 crisis, they immediately confronted the new European financial crisis erupting in 2010. They prevented it from going global by creating a \$500 billion "firewall fund" in 2012, as an achievement that has endured to this day. This brought another role reversal. The United States abandoned its historic position as the lender of last resort by contributing nothing to the fund and watched China and other G20 members take its place. Throughout all three financial crises, only a few G20 members were providers rather than consumers of financial security every time. They were emerging China, India and South Africa, established Japan, Australia and Canada (for the first two) and Saudi Arabia, which will host in 2020.

Having provided global financial stability, the G20 turned to its second distinctive mission of making globalization work for all. Starting in 2013, the summits increasingly emphasized inclusive growth, and expanded their agenda to address broader, bigger issues across the social, ecological, security realms.

G20 summit performance steadily rose across all key dimensions of governance that such international summit institutions produce (see Appendix A).

In their public deliberation, the G20's communiqués almost doubled from 3,567 words at Washington in 2008 to 6,623 at Osaka in 2019.

In decision making, G20 commitments rose from 95 in 2008 to 143 in 2019. Moreover, the breadth of their subject matter steadily spread (see Appendix E). Financial regulation dominated through to 2012 but then declined. Reform of international financial institutions was robust through to 2001 but then dropped. In contrast, labour and employment rose after 2012. The security subjects of crime and corruption and of terrorism spiked in 2013 and 2015 respectively.

The new subject of digitalization and information and communications technologies started only in 2015 and soared after 2016. Health continuously had commitments since 2014. Gender equality began in 2012. The fully globalized subject of climate change started in 2009 and spiked in 2013. Human rights appeared first in 2018. The great shift from the old economic focus to the new social-ecological-security focus came at Hamburg in 2017. It made 22 commitments on climate change, another 57 on the environment and 19 on health, among the 529 it produced overall.

In G20 members' delivery of these decisions, compliance with their priority commitments averaged 71%, and rose from 57% with London's commitments in 2009 to 79% with the Buenos Aires ones in 2018, as assessed by the G20 Research Group.

In the 276 G20 summit priority commitments assessed for compliance, international law was referenced 16 times in 15 commitments. References were led by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with six, the UN Convention against Corruption with four, the Copenhagen Accord and the Paris climate change agreement with two each, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the OECD's anti-bribery convention with one each. References to international law appeared at Pittsburgh in 2009 with four, Toronto in 2010 with three, Seoul in 2009 with two, then almost none until 2014 at Brisbane with three, 2015 at Antalya with one, 2016 at Hangzhou with one and 2018 at Buenos Aires with one. Human rights was referenced not at all.

In the institutionalized development of global governance inside the G20, as noted above, the ministerial forums created expanded since 2010. They spread from finance ministers and central bank governors since the start in 1999 to those for labour, tourism, agriculture, development, trade, foreign affairs, energy, digitalization, health and the environment by 2019 (see Appendix B).

In recent years, the 2017 Hamburg Summit highlighted the highly inclusive message that the economy should serve society, not the other way around. The 2019 Osaka Summit produced the signature "Osaka track for digital free flow with trust" and advances in trade, health, oceans and much else (Kirton and Koch 2019).

The Riyadh's Summit Prospective Rising Legitimacy

The G20 summit's legitimacy is likely to increase at the Riyadh Summit that Saudi Arabia will host in November 2020. The Saudi presidency is starting with an approach that puts people first. Protecting the planet ecologically is one of its three themes. Its initial themes and 17 agenda priorities, announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to his fellow leaders at the end of the Osaka Summit in June 2019, match the SDGs to a high degree. This high match continued into late October, when Princess Haifa Al Mogrin, Saudi Arabia's assistant deputy minister for sustainable development and G20 affairs, launching the G20 Development Working Group at the United Nations, confirmed the priorities of climate change, water, energy, food security, infrastructure, women's empowerment and youth, human capital, inclusiveness, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Riyadh priorities thus include several focused on the natural environment, including financing for the development, including the ecologically intensive SDGs, climate change and emissions reductions, food security, energy and water access, and water security and sustainability globally and

in the Middle East. Others focused on globalization for all are economic inclusiveness and fairness and youth and women's empowerment.

Moreover, these priorities are grounded in Saudi Arabia's own long-term development plan, Vision 2030 (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2016). The Kingdom has now begun energetically to implement them (Nereim 2019).

In its preparatory process, the Saudi host began at a very early stage by mounting a broadly global, intense consultative preparatory process, involving civil society actors of all kinds. By October 2019 it had begun engaging with the formal engagements groups, including an international gathering of key members of the T20.

Strengthening G20 Legitimacy

Yet there remain several ways in which G20 legitimacy can and should be strengthened in the coming years.

The first reform is to have the G20 summit return to its initial cadence of having leaders meet twice a year. The second meeting could now take place during the UN General Assembly each September. This would lower transaction costs in scheduling and travel and enable the G20 to more directly support the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, by reviewing, financing and improving their implementation (see Appendices F and G). The high match among the 17 SDGs, the 143 commitments made at the G20 Osaka Summit and the 61 commitments made at the UN's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York in late September 2019 suggest the value of this move (see Appendix H).

The second reform is to make the United Nations a full participant at the G20, by giving it the same status as the IMF and World Bank. This would match the great broadening of the G20 summit agenda since 2008, including its strong move into the ecological and political security spheres (Kirton 2017). It would also reflect the G20's growing concern with the UN's 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

The third reform is to mount more ministerial meetings. This would increase input legitimacy, as more stakeholders could participate, and output legitimacy, as more commitments and compliance could arise.

The fourth reform is to end the G20's de facto linguistic imperialism by having all of its outcome documents and other products produced in all the languages that the citizens of all G20 countries and even the full global community can and do read and speak at home. This list begins with English, French, and Chinese but extends well beyond. G20 transparency, accountability and claim to govern for and with the people would thus be enhanced.

A further set of recommendations is part of a desirable strategy to lead global ecological sustainability and support the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The first such recommendation is to institutionalize the new G20 environment ministers' meeting created in 2019. It could be combined with the energy ministers' meeting, with each convening separately and then combining to address their many shared concerns. This formula worked well for the G7 in Canada's year as host in 2018, where ministers of fisheries and oceans were also involved.

The second recommendation is to create a separate "Environment 20" engagement group, apart from the Science 20. The Think 20 should focus on the synergies of the environment with other closely related areas such as energy, health and digitalization.

The third recommendation is to invite to the summit and to the lead-up environmental ministerial meeting the heads of UN Climate Change, UN Biodiversity and UN Environment.

The fourth recommendation is to invite to the summit and ministerial meetings the leaders of the small countries most rapidly becoming carbon neutral, such as Costa Rica, and those currently most vulnerable to climate change, including several small island developing states (see Appendix G).

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Recommended Reading

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Appendix A: G20 Summit Performance, 2008-2019

Summit	Grade	Domestic political management			Deliberation			Direction setting				Decision making	Delivery		Development of global governance					
		Attendance	# compliments	% members complimented	# days	# documents	# words	Stability	Inclusion	Democracy	Liberty	# commitments	Compliance	# Assessed	Internal		External		Engagement groups	
															# references	Spread	# references	Spread	# references	Spread
2008 (Nov 14-15) Washington, United States	A-	100%	0	0%	2	2	3,567	16	2	10	2	95	75%	8	0	4	39	11	0	0
2009 (Apr 1-2) London, United Kingdom	A	100%	1	5%	2	3	6,155	29	6	9	0	129	57%	7	12	4	120	27	0	0
2009 (Sep 24-25) Pittsburgh, United States	A-	100%	0	0%	2	2	9,257	11	21	28	1	128	67%	15	47	4	115	26	0	0
2010 (Jun 26-27) Toronto, Canada	A-	90%	8	15%	2	5	11,078	47	32	11	1	61	68%	15	71	4	164	27	0	0
2010 (Nov 11-12) Seoul, Korea	B	95%	5	15%	2	5	15,776	66	36	18	4	153	67%	41	99	4	237	31	0	0
2011 (Nov 3-4) Cannes, France	B	95%	11	35%	2	3	14,107	42	8	22	0	282	74%	22	59	4	247	27	4	2
2012 (Jun 18-19) Los Cabos, Mexico	A-	95%	6	15%	2	2	12,682	43	23	31	3	180	77%	20	65	4	138	20	7	2
2013 (Sep 5-6) St. Petersburg, Russia	A	90%	15	55%	2	11	28,766	73	108	15	3	281	69%	24	190	4	237	27	9	5
2014 (Nov 15-16) Brisbane, Australia	B	90%	10	40%	2	5	9,111	10	12	1	0	205	70%	27	39	4	42	12	0	0
2015 (Nov 15-16) Antalya, Turkey	B	90%	0	0%	2	6	5,983	13	22	0	2	198	71%	24	42	4	54	11	8	6

Summit	Grade	Domestic political management			Deliberation			Direction setting				Decision making	Delivery		Development of global governance					
		Attendance	# compliments	% members complimented	# days	# documents	# words	Stability	Inclusion	Democracy	Liberty	# commitments	Compliance	# Assessed	Internal		External		Engagement groups	
															# references	Spread	# references	Spread	# references	Spread
2016 (Sep 4-5) Hangzhou, China	B+	95%	7	25%	2	4	16,004	11	29	34	5	213	71%	29	179	4	223	19	14	6
2017 (Jul 6-8) Hamburg, Germany	B+	95%	0	0	2	10	34,746	42	61	2	11	529	76%	26	54	6	307	19		
2018 (Nov 30-Dec 1) Buenos Aires, Argentina	B-	90%	0	0	2	2	13,515	23	53	7	2	128	79%	20	20	5	24	15		
2019 (Jun 28-29) Osaka, Japan		95%	2	5%	2	2	6,623	13	16			143	-	-	56	5	54	17		
2020 (Nov 21-22) Riyadh, Saudi Arabia																				
Total	N/A	N/A	65	N/A	28	62	187,370	439	429	188	34	2,725	N/A	278	933	60	2,001	289		
Average	N/A	95%	4.6	19%	2	4.4	13,384	31.4	31	14.5	2.6	195	71%	20	66.7	4.3	143	21		

Notes: N/A = not applicable. Only documents issued at a summit in the leaders' name are included. Grade is based on a scoring scheme created by John Kirton, as follows: A+ = Extremely Strong, A = Very Strong, A- = Strong, B+ = Significant, B = Substantial, B- = Solid, C = Small, D = Very Small, F = Failure (including made things worse). See <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/analysis/scoring.html>. Domestic political management: participation by G20 members and at least one representative from the European Union and excludes invited countries; compliments are references to full members in summit documents.

Deliberation: duration of the summit and the documents collectively released in the leaders' name at the summit.

Direction setting: number of statements of fact, causation and rectitude relating directly to stability, inclusion, open democracy and individual liberty.

Decision making: number of commitments as identified by the G20 Research Group.

Delivery: scores are measured on a scale from -1 (no compliance) to +1 (full compliance, or fulfilment of goal set out in commitment). Figures are cumulative scores based on compliance reports.

Development of global governance: internal are references to G20 institutions in summit documents; external are references to institutions outside the G20; engagement groups are references to official engagement groups. Spread indicates the number of different institutions mentioned.

Appendix B: Ministerial Meetings

Finance	1999-
Employment and Labour	2010-
Tourism	2010-2013, 2019
Agriculture	2011, 2012, 2015-2017, 2019
Development	2011
Trade	2012, 2014-2016, 2019
Foreign Affairs	2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019
Energy	2015, 2016, 2018, 2019
Digitalization	2017, 2018, 2019
Health	2017, 2018, 2019
Environment	2019

Appendix C: Civil Society Engagement Groups

Official		
B20	Business	2010-
L20	Labour	2010-2012, 2014-
C20	Civil	2011, 2013-
P20	Parliamentarians	2010-
T20	Think Tanks	2012-
Y20	Youth	2013-
W20	Women	2015-
S20	Science	2017-
Unofficial		
YES	Young Entrepreneurs' Summit	2010-
(G)20	Girls	2010-
F20	Interfaith	2014-

Appendix D: T20 Recommendations Realized

In 2018, the T20 made 135 recommendations to the G20 leaders before their Buenos Aires Summit on November 30 to December 1, 2018. Of these 135 recommendations, 33 (24%) either partially or fully matched the 128 commitments made by the G20 leaders at Buenos Aires (Warren and Kirton 2019).

A similar outcome occurred a year earlier, suggesting a general consistency in T20 influence on G20 outcomes. In 2017 the T20 made 89 recommendations to the G20 leaders before their Hamburg Summit on July 7–8, 2017 (Kirton and Warren 2017). Of these, 23 (26%) of the 89 recommendations were either fully or partially recognized in the 529 commitments made by G20 leaders at Hamburg.

An extended analysis of the T20-G20 relationship in 2017 showed that the G20 complied slightly better with the commitments that matched a T20 recommendation (Warren and Kirton 2019). This suggests that the T20 has an influence not only on the substance of the commitments made by the G20 but on the implementation of those commitments too. Caution is needed in interpreting these results, as the compliance gap between matched and non-matched Hamburg commitments is small (91% versus 86%, respectively). Still, this new finding still indicates that a larger dataset would be useful in understanding the interlinkages between the state-led G20 and the nonstate-actor-led T20 and the impact of the latter on the former.

In 2016, for the Hangzhou Summit, the T20 made 22 recommendations across seven issue areas (Tops and Hou 2019). A very high 19 (89%) of these 22 recommendations were fully or partially matched in the 211 commitments that G20 leaders made in their Hangzhou Summit communiqués. A complete match came with the G20 recommendations on labour and employment, reform of the international financial institutions, development and infrastructure. This was followed by an 80% match on trade and a 75% match on macroeconomic policy and financial regulation. Ten Hangzhou commitments assessed for members' compliance by the G20 Research Group matched one or more of the T20's recommendations. These 10 matched commitments averaged compliance of 86%, compared with compliance of only 64% for those G20 commitments with a T20 recommendation backing them.

Appendix E: All G20 Summit Commitments by Subject, 2008-2019

Issue	Total	2008 W	2009 L	2009 P	2010 T	2010 S	2011 C	2012 LC	2013 SP	2014 B	2015 A	2016 H	2017 HB	2018 BA	2019 O
Macroeconomic policy	476	6	15	28	14	29	91	71	66	34	21	31	40	21	9
Financial regulation	350	59	45	23	12	24	38	18	20	7	8	25	39	22	10
Development	295	4	15	9	8	22	17	10	50	20	20	18	75	3	24
Trade	175	5	14	6	9	17	15	10	12	9	14	24	29	5	6
Energy	157	0	0	16	1	14	18	10	19	16	3	8	42	8	2
Labour/Employment	153	0	4	3	0	4	8	18	29	16	10	9	25	18	9
IFI reform	144	14	29	11	4	16	22	8	5	4	2	4	14	7	4
Food and agriculture	123	0	0	3	2	2	36	4	11	0	31	3	22	5	4
Crime and corruption	127	3	0	3	3	9	5	7	33	4	4	7	32	5	12
ICT/Digitization	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	48	27	11	6
Accountability	79	4	3	15	3	4	5	13	9	17	2	4	0	0	0
Climate change	91	0	3	3	3	8	8	5	11	7	3	2	22	3	13
Environment	69	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	57	0	7
Health	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	2	3	19	4	14
G20 governance	48	0	0	3	0	2	12	3	12	0	0	7	9	0	0
Infrastructure	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	8	6	1	1
Terrorism	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	12	3	24	3	5
Gender	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	30	7	12
Migration/Refugees	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	16	1	0
Social policy	15	0	1	1	2	1	3	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0
Microeconomics	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	3	0	0	0
Education	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Human rights	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5
Total	2,667	95	129	128	61	153	282	180	281	205	113	211	529	117	143

ICT = information and communications technologies; IFI = international financial institution.

Compiled by Caroline Bracht and Brittany Warren, G20 Research Group.

Appendix F: Support from the UN's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Further support for the G20's prospective success on climate change control and environmental sustainability at the Riyadh Summit comes from increasing multilateral action to implement the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (see Table F-1). Unlike the preceding eight Millennium Development Goals, with three dedicated to the traditional development priority of health, the 17 SDGs are much more ecologically focused. The seven dedicated to ecological sustainability are SDG 13 on climate, SDG 6 on water, SDG 7 on clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on sustainable production and consumption, SDG 14 on sustainable oceans, and SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. The G20 has long governed each of these seven subjects and many of the other related SDGs as well (see Table F-2).

Moreover, the United Nations has already moved to mount more summits dedicated to climate change, rather than waiting to do so only at the half-decade intervals as it had since 1992. On September 23, 2019, Secretary General António Guterres held a Climate Action Summit to which over 63 country leaders came. Donald Trump made a brief appearance, to hear German chancellor Angela Merkel and Indian prime minister Narendra Modi speak. A few days later the full SDG review summit was held (see Table F-3).

The G20's Riyadh Summit will build on the results of the unprecedented cluster of all five UN summits that took place in New York City in September 2019. They started on September 23 with the Climate Action Summit and the High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage and continued with high level meetings on financing for development, SDG implementation and small island development states.

In December 2020, immediately after the Riyadh Summit, UN Climate Change will hold its Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting in Glasgow, Scotland. Here members meeting at the ministerial and summit levels are scheduled to make even stronger commitments on climate change control than the inadequate ones they made at the Paris Summit in December 2015. Glasgow offers an opportunity for the G20's Riyadh Summit to provide the momentum and set the framework for the UN's Glasgow COP to produce a stronger fully multilateral success on climate change. To do so, the Riyadh Summit must avoid the temptation to ignore the difficult, divisive issue of climate change, on the grounds that the United Nations will address it a few weeks later. This rationale and resulting delay arose at the G20's Antalya Summit in 2015 and the G7's Biarritz Summit in 2019.

Table F-1: The UN 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals

1. No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
1. Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
2. Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
3. Quality Education: Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
4. Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
5. Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
6. Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
7. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
8. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
9. Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries
10. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
11. Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns
12. Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
13. Life Below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
14. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
15. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
16. Partnership

Table F-2: G20 Summit SDG Governance, 2008-2018

Sustainable Development Goal*	G20 subject	G20 governance									
		Deliberation	Domestic political management	Direction setting		Decisions	Delivery		Development of global governance		
				Financial stability	Globalization for all		Score	# assessed	Inside	Outside	
1	Poverty	Development	47,725								
2	Hunger	Food and agriculture	13,098	2			123	73%	9		
3	Health	Health	5,810				75	73%	9		
4	Education	Education	10,341				5	-	0		
5	Gender	Gender	9,881				55	60%	11		
6	Water		458								
7	Energy	Energy	11,440				157	73%	21		
8	Jobs	Labour & employment	28,253				153	75%	20		
9	Infrastructure	Infrastructure	9,530				44	90%	2		
10	Inequality										
11	Cities	Cities	1,706								
12	Consumption										
13	Climate change	Climate change	16,912				91	69%	31		
14	Oceans	Oceans	1,827								
15	Land	Biodiversity	859								
16	Peace/Justice	Crime/corruption	8,559								
		Terrorism	5,748								
17	Partnership	Cooperation									

Note: Biodiversity conclusions includes 2019. Compiled by Brittany Warren, G20 Research Group.

Table F-3: Commitments in the 2019 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Osaka Summit

United Nations High Level Meeting on Sustainable Development		G20 Osaka Summit	
Subjects	# commitments	Subjects	# commitments
Poverty	8	Development	24
Hunger	1	Food and agriculture	4
Health	1	Health	14
Gender	4	Gender	12
Clean water	1	Environment*	7
Sustainable consumption and production	2		
Oceans	0		
Life on land	2		
Clean Energy	1	Energy*	2
Decent Work	2	Labour/employment	9
Infrastructure	1	Infrastructure	1
Climate change	5	Climate change	13
Inequality	2		
Cities	1		
Peace/Justice/Institutions	10		
Partnerships	17		
Education	3		
		Terrorism	5
		Human rights	5
		Reform of international financial institutions	4
		Financial regulation	10
		Crime and corruption	12
		Macroeconomic policy	9
		Trade	6
		Digitalization	6
Total	61	Total	143

Note: Compiled by Brittany Warren.

Appendix G: The Financial and Economic Cost of Climate Change

The report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on October 8, 2018, estimated that the world would suffer \$54 trillion in economic damages with warming of 1.5°C between 2018 and 2040 (Hoegh-Guldberg, Jacob, Taylor et al. 2018; Keefe 2018).

Between 1998 and 2017 direct economic damages from disasters totalled almost \$3 trillion, with climate-related ones providing 77% of the total and rising by 151% during this time (United Nations 2019, 23).

In their Global Investor Statement on Climate Change issued in December 2018, 415 global investors — managing a total of \$32 trillion — declared that climate change could cause permanent economic damage of up to four times that of the 2008 global financial crisis, with one member estimating a 4°C temperature rise beyond pre-industrial levels could cause \$23 trillion in global economic losses by 2100 (Nace 2018).

In September 2019, the UN-sponsored Principles for Responsible Investing (2019), with more than 500 global asset managers, predicted a market “response by 2025 that will be forceful, abrupt and disorderly because of the delay” in controlling climate change. Hans Helbekkmo of McKinsey added that “we could see loss rates [from mortgage defaults] similar to the 2007 [subprime crisis] in the next 10 to 20 years” (quoted in Tett 2019).

On October 9, 2019, the International Monetary Fund (2019) released its Fiscal Monitor, devoted entirely to climate change.