

G20 and BRICS: Enhancing Delivery Legitimacy¹

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Abstract

The global commons faces a myriad of increasingly complex, interrelated challenges spanning a range of environmental, security, economic, health and development issues. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort by the most influential political leaders representing the world's most significant countries.

Getting traction on these issues thus requires a process of global governance in which these leaders can regularly meet and forge consensus on how to confront this ground swell of evolving global challenges.

The G20 and the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa sit at the very epicentre of this important global governance structure, serving as the key plurilateral summit institutions (PSIs) able to confront these critical and complex challenges.

The question of why and how the BRICS and G20 can provide better global governance is seminal to understanding the value and prominence of these high-level plurilateral summit institutions.

This paper argues that in order for these PSIs to govern more effectively, they must forge consensus and generate concrete commitments against which they can be effectively evaluated and assessed. Without a scorecard against which to measure their accountability, the issue of their legitimacy as global governance leaders is strongly called into question.

Also implicit in this debate is the question of whether the G20 and BRICS can and should act in cooperation or competition with other international organizations and PSIs. If so, are their chances of enhanced accountability heightened or reduced? This paper argues that to be effective global governance leaders, the G20 and BRICS can and must work in concert with other key regional, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, the business community and thought leaders. Only through this enhanced level of collaboration and cooperation can the G20 and BRICS generate the level of international support needed to forge their global governance agenda.

Key words: G20; BRICS; summits; summitry; global governance; institutions; legitimacy; leadership; commitments; accountability

For citation: Kokotsis E. (2017) G20 and BRICS: Enhancing Delivery Legitimacy. *International Organisations Research Journal*, vol. 12, no 2, pp. 194–210 (in Russian and English). DOI: 10.17323/1996-7845-2017-02-195

Introduction

The global commons faces a myriad of increasingly complex, interrelated challenges spanning a range of environmental, security, economic, health and development issues. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort by the most influential political leaders representing the world's most significant countries.

¹ The editorial board received the article in October 2016.

Confronting this ground swell of evolving global challenges requires a process of global governance in which these leaders can regularly meet, forge consensus, reach commitments and ultimately deliver on the promises they make. Led by the G7's formation in 1975, the G20 (2008) and the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (2009) all sit at the very epicentre of this global governance structure, serving as the key plurilateral summit institutions (PSIs) able to confront these complex challenges and respond to them in ways that deliver concrete results. Recognizing that they cannot act alone, PSIs turn to, and are joined by, a vast array of international organizations, multilateral and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and business communities, each specific in their ability to contribute value in their respective areas of knowledge and understanding.

Given the current depth and breadth of the academic literature and analytical assessments available on the G7/8's performance, this paper focuses its attention instead on the G20, created at the leaders' level in 2008, and the BRICS, with its first official meetings beginning in 2009. It argues that understanding why and how the BRICS and G20 can provide better global governance is seminal to understanding the value and prominence of these high-level plurilateral summit institutions. It further argues that in order for these PSIs to govern more effectively, the G20 and BRICS must forge consensus and generate concrete commitments against which they can be effectively evaluated and assessed. Without a scorecard against which to measure their accountability, the issue of their legitimacy as global governance leaders is strongly called into question.

Observers and critics of these PSIs have often argued that their overall performance is inadequate as they systematically fail to produce concrete, timely and ambitious commitments that are monitored and kept. Questions of accountability and legitimacy lie at the very core of this debate – the ability of these PSIs to not only make and keep commitments that count but also to comply with them at summit's end is central to understanding how they can assess and correct their own accountability mechanisms. Understanding the causes and circumstances under which more effective accountability can occur is the key to enhancing their overall effectiveness and legitimacy as global governance leaders.

This paper assesses the current analytical information available on the commitments generated by both the G20 and BRICS, presents the current findings on their ability to deliver on the commitments generated and offers explanations regarding current trends in overall accountability behaviour. To do so, this paper first examines the number, configuration and range of commitments generated by both the G20 and BRICS summits since their inception. It then explores the various causal models of accountability with these commitments, focusing specifically on those accountability mechanisms that have garnered the greatest success for each PSI to date.

Implicit in this debate is also the question of whether the G20 and BRICS can and should act in cooperation or competition with one another as well as other international organizations and PSIs. If so, are their chances of enhanced accountability heightened or reduced? This paper argues that to be effective global governance leaders, the G20

and BRICS can and must work in concert with other key regional, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, the business community and thought leaders. Only through this enhanced level of collaboration and cooperation can the G20 and BRICS generate the level of international support needed to forge their global governance agendas.

This paper draws principally on the methodology and annual analytical assessments developed and applied by the G20 and BRICS Research Group at the University of Toronto, the International Organizations Research Institute of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (IORI HSE) and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA). It concludes by offering a set of prescriptive recommendations for enhancing and improving those accountability mechanisms and approaches which are central to delivering the greatest results for these key plurilateral summit institutions.

The Analytical Framework

The analytical framework used in this paper to assess the overall summit performance of the G20 and BRICS is based on the original work of Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne [1984, 1987] and George von Furstenberg and Joseph Daniels [1993]. It then builds on the work led primarily by John Kirton since 1989, and then by John Kirton and Ella Kokotsis since 1994, assessing decision-making through commitments and delivery through accountability by summits and associated ministerial meetings of the G7 and G8. In 1996, this work expanded under the direction of John Kirton, with the annual production of G8 and then G20 summit accountability reports issued by the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto and the International Organizations Research Institute of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow. Since 2009, this work has further expanded to include accountability assessments by the BRICS Research Group based in Toronto and Moscow.

Summit *commitments* are defined as a discrete, specific, publicly expressed, collectively agreed to statements of intent; a “promise” or “undertaking” by summit members that they will undertake future action to move toward, meet or adjust to an identified welfare target [Kokotsis, 1999]. Four key criteria are contained within this definition: first, commitments must be discrete in that each specified welfare target or outcome represents a separate commitment, even if a single set of actions supports these multiple aims and/or targets; second, commitments must be sufficiently *specific* and the target needs to be both *identifiable* and *measurable*; third, commitments must be future-oriented rather than representing endorsements of previous action; and fourth, while action by summit members is assumed to be required in the future, this does not need to be specified. It is assumed by the tense used.

Commitments themselves can be categorized in number of useful ways, including: by *issue area* using the definitions employed for the communique conclusions; by *money mobilized*, as summits are often mobilizers of global funds for specific purposes either at home or abroad — this includes money mobilized for commitments to in-

crease financial support to a specific issue area, or replenish funds and provide monetary aid; *international legalization* in which commitments explicitly bind members to either adhere to, revise or create international law; and *domestic legalization* in which commitments explicitly bind the member to either adhere to, revise or create domestic law [Kirton, Kokotsis, Guebert et al., 2016].

The selection of *priority* commitments for the purpose of accountability assessments has been done since 1996 by the Research Groups for their regular accountability assessments. This method offers a way of identifying which commitments are seen as most important and representative at each summit. These priority commitments are comprehensive and should transcend each part of the summit's agenda (finance, trade, macro-economic, security, environment, energy, terrorism, reform of international financial institutions (IFIs) and regional security). The overall number of priority commitments selected from each summit roughly reflects the percentage of overall commitments generated at the summit as a whole. Priority commitments include those that reflect current crises as well as preventative measures, and also those that affect both the G20 and BRICS members as well as non-summit members. Finally, priority commitments should take into account past commitments, so that year to year comparisons and extended accountability can be more accurately monitored [Kirton, Kokotsis, Guebert et al., 2016].

Do these commitments have an overall impact once the summit is over, and can that impact be measured? Are there limits on *how much* or *how often* summit members and participants comply with their summit commitments? Does national autonomy or different domestic and international demands impact how well and how often member states comply? Empirical assessments on accountability trends completed since 1996 by the G8, G20 and BRICS Research Groups offer explanations on three key questions: first, to what extent and under what conditions do summit members comply with their commitments; second, does the pattern of summit accountability vary over time, by issue area and by member state; and third, what are some of the causal variables affecting accountability behaviour and accountability trends? Understanding how much accountability has occurred, when and by what country allows summit observers and practitioners to draw important conclusions about the overall effectiveness of these PSIs and how overall summit accountability can be improved.

Accountability in this regard is defined by those actions undertaken in the post-summit period by national governments geared towards the domestic implementation of the necessary formal legislative and administrative regulations designed to execute summit commitments. In this respect, national governments alter their own behaviour and that of their societies and outsiders, in order to reach summit-specified welfare targets. Accountability therefore requires new or altered efforts by national governments where leaders very *actively* and *consciously* plan to implement their G20 or BRICS commitments. These actions need to be *deliberate*. A commitment can be said to have been fully complied with if a summit member succeeds in achieving the specific goal set out in the commitment reached. However, there can still be varying degrees of accountability in the absence of a complete fulfillment of the commitment. Accountability is therefore assessed according to the following criteria: first, full or nearly full accounta-

bility with a commitment is assigned a score of +1; second, a score of -1 indicates complete or nearly complete failure to implement a commitment; and third, an “inability to commit” or a “work in progress” is given a score of 0. Note that an “*inability to commit*” refers to factors outside of the executive branch that impede implementation. A “*work in progress*” refers to an initiative that has been launched by a government but has not yet been completed by the time of the next summit and whose results therefore cannot be judged or assessed [Kokotsis 1999]. Some commitments may be reiterated year after year. If the G20 or BRICS leaders reiterate certain commitments, they are still counted as distinct commitments and hence measured and evaluated.

Commitments for both the G20 and BRICS summits are assessed from the time spanning the conclusion of one summit until the beginning of the next. While the BRICS meetings have taken place once per calendar year since their inception in 2009, the G20 meetings have varied from between five and 15 months apart. The frequency of the G20 gatherings has often corresponded with the need for increased cooperation around global financial crises, prompting the G20 leaders to meet on an as-needed basis, rather than by a set calendar date. A clear set of interpretive guidelines and definitions have been established by the G20 and BRICS Research Groups allowing for a consistent measurement and assessment methodology that spans the year to year accountability assessments [Kirton, Kokotsis, Guebert et al., 2016].

The analysis in this paper draws on the data presented in the G20 and BRICS accountability reports prepared by the G20 Research Group and the IORI HSE for the summits between 2008 and 2016. BRICS accountability data is only available only for those summits between 2011 and 2016.

G20 Accountability

What do recent accountability assessments tell us about the G20’s ability to follow through on the commitments generated since these leaders first began meeting in 2008? Global attention around issues of summit accountability began to escalate following the release of the G8’s first comprehensive accountability report in Canada in 2010. However, *G20 accountability* is in fact rooted in its first leader’s-level summit. Meeting in Washington in 2008, the G20 devoted an entire section of their final declaration to “*strengthening transparency and accountability*,” emphasizing the need for detailed targets and timetables on a number of commitments generated at their first heads-only meeting. Here, the G20 tasked their finance ministers with the responsibility of ensuring that their commitments on financial and regulatory reform were “*fully and vigorously implemented*” (G20, Washington 2008). Indeed, certain financial commitments were delivered swiftly and transparently following these early meetings. For example, the G20 quickly delivered on its commitment to expand the Financial Stability Forum to the Financial Stability Board following the London summit in 2009. In Toronto the following year, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated very clearly from the outset that the issue of *accountability* would be the “defining feature” of his G8 and G20 summits (G20, Muskoka 2010). Yet despite this, sceptics argue the G20 has fallen short on its antiprotectionism pledges,

its commitment to a green recovery, food security and its promise to higher equity in labour markets. Moreover, sceptics have argued that the G20 has failed to produce a comprehensive accountability mechanism similar to that of the G8 [Lawson-Remer, 2012; Interaction, 2012]. And although a number of efforts on accountability reporting were made (by the British and Korean chairs in 2009–2010, for example), these were weak at best, excluding critical components such as detailed evidence-based research, country-specific analysis, and quantitative reporting.

Much of the criticism of the G20's accountability deficit derives primarily from three sources: first, the group's lack of formal authority, including an agreed-to set of sanctions (or at least consequences) for violations of non-accountability; second, its lack of legal structure, excluding it from formal rules or doctrines; and third, the overall lack of key accountability components, including a baseline set of standards, quantitative reporting structures and consistent information sharing mechanisms [Lawson-Remer, 2012; Interaction, 2012]

Equally important, the G20's perceived dearth of *normative values* is often blamed for its accountability shortfalls. Contrary to the G8 which is traditionally viewed as a global nexus of like-minded, western leaders [Lesage, 2007], the G20's perceived inability to consistently follow up on its promises is often attributed to its lack of a common set of universal values and norms including the pursuit of democracy, support for human rights, and a belief in free-market economies. G20 observers and sceptics have thus often questioned the ability, and indeed *capacity* of the G20 to forge consensus, reach and honour agreements, and build an effective global governance regime with a membership as politically, economically, religiously and culturally diverse as its member's states. Indeed, the G20 represents a significant cultural convergence at the highest political level between East and West, North and South, Christianity and Islam. If one considers the G20's composition, its representation consists of six Asian, three Islamic and ten emerging market economies spanning Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Not to mention the convergence of government structures between democracy, communism and absolute monarchy. Others have questioned whether it is even possible to reach consensus on decisions rendered — never mind fulfill international promises — when these perceived obstacles make delivery on core commitments challenging at best [Kokotsis, 2012].

Although its history is still relatively young (compared to the 40-year history of the G7/8), and the robustness of its accountability data is still evolving, trends are beginning to emerge across a number of independent, analytical assessments of G20 accountability.

The G20 Research Group at the University of Toronto and the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow have monitored and assessed the implementation of priority commitments from each G20 summit since the first leaders' level meeting in 2008. These commitments are selected according to the G20's core agenda items and priority issues introduced that year by the summit host. From the time of their first summit in 2008 in Washington until 2015, the G20 has made a total of 1,712 commitments (Appendix A is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>). 189 of these core commitments have been assessed with an overall

accountability average of +0.41 or about 70%. Issues with the highest overall accountability (with sample sizes greater than three) are those associated with the G20's areas of core institutional concentration, primarily macroeconomics, financial regulation, labour and employment. Those issues with the lowest overall accountability scores fall within the areas of international trade, crime and corruption. With the launch of the 2010 Seoul Development Consensus, accountability with those issue areas associated with core development goals, including health, climate change, food security and agriculture, have all fallen comfortably within the middle range of the G20's overall accountability performance spectrum (Appendix B is available <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>).

Accountability varies significantly by country, with the highest accountability scores across the assessed core commitments generated by the UK, Germany, France and Canada. Those at the lower end of the accountability spectrum are Turkey, Indonesia, Argentina and Saudi Arabia (Appendix B is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>).

These accountability trends also demonstrate noticeable variation over time. Falling on the heels of the global financial crisis in 2008, the first leaders' level G20 generated an overall accountability score of +0.55, falling to +0.17 in London in 2009 and rising again later that year in Pittsburgh to +0.31. The 2010 back-to-back G20 summits in Toronto and Seoul generated accountability scores of +0.30 and +0.34 respectively. Over the next two years, the G20's accountability scores peaked, reaching +0.54 in Cannes 2011 and +0.55 in Los Cabos 2012. Accountability scores dropped substantially to +0.37 during the 2013 St. Petersburg summit, only to rise again in Brisbane 2014 and Antalya in 2015, each at +0.46 and +0.42 respectively. Factors accounting for these variations by issue area, by country and over time are addressed in the "*Accountability Trends*" section below.

BRICS Accountability

Since 2009, the leaders of India, Brazil, Russia and China began meeting on the margins of the G20, adding South Africa officially to the table in 2012 as a full-fledged BRICS member. During this time, observers from around the world have paid close attention to what the BRICS can realistically achieve as a group, as the heads of state and government from these five emerging economies continue to address a very broad and diverse range of international issues spanning the global economy, international trade, food security, health and innovation, agricultural development, energy security and climate change. To demonstrate their collective leadership and forge an impression during this dynamically evolving era of global governance, the BRICS members have begun to demonstrate that they are capable not only of reaching consensus on some of the most pressing and complex global challenges, but also effectively delivering on a number of these broad-spectrum global commitments [Kirton, 2015; Cooper, 2016].

The basis of BRICS influence in the international system reflects their ever increasing collective economic and demographic power. With 45% of the world's popu-

lation spanning 30% of the earth's surface and producing 25% of the world's share of global gross domestic product (GDP), these five countries have collectively contributed more than 50% of the world's economic growth over the past decade (BRICS, Ministry of External Relations). Based on this trend, by 2030, the cumulative GDP of the BRICS will exceed that of the G7/8 major industrialized countries. This clearly places the BRICS in a position of global economic leadership, enabling the group to reach consensus and craft decisions across a broad range of policy issues [Larionova, Kirton, 2015]. But can the success of the BRICS be measured not only in terms of the ability of its members reach consensus, but also on its capacity to implement its collectively agreed to summit commitments?

What do the empirical findings on BRICS accountability reveal to date? The BRICS Research Group at the University of Toronto and the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow have monitored and assessed the implementation of priority commitments from each BRICS summit since the first leaders' level meeting in 2009 until 2016. During this time, the BRICS members have generated 446 distinct, measurable, future-oriented commitments spanning 33 specific issue areas (Appendix C is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>). While their first meeting in Yekaterinburg generated only 16 such commitments, the subsequent summit in Brasilia in 2010 yielded 46 commitments. That number fell to 38 commitments in Sanya in 2011, and down further to 32 at the 2012 Delhi summit. That number rose again to 47 at the 2013 Durban BRICS summit, followed by a surge of 91 commitments in Fortaleza in 2014. This number grew to a record 130 commitments at the Ufa BRICS summit in Russia in 2015. The commitments generated dropped again quite dramatically at the most recent 2016 Goa summit, with a total of 46 commitments generated by the BRICS heads of state and government (Appendix D is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>).

The highest concentration of commitments generated by the BRICS since its inception have been on matters of international cooperation at 74, followed by development at 40, and then by issues related to trade and macroeconomics, each at 33. Although addressed in some capacity at their meetings, those issues related to conflict prevention, non-proliferation, labour and employment and gender equality have generated the least number of overall commitments by the BRICS member states.

The BRICS analysis reveals that this PSI is increasingly developing into a robust and durable decisional forum, similar to its G8 and G20 counterparts. Its comprehensive decisional performance is seen through the broadening of its policy agenda; initially focused on financial regulation, trade, macroeconomics and energy during its first two summits, its agenda was extended the following year to include agriculture, food, health, human rights, climate change, terrorism and regional security. Since 2012, its policy agenda has expanded even more to include issues related to peace and security, institutionalization and accountability, demonstrating the BRICS cooperative, outward-looking, development-devoted focus.

Understanding early commitment trends, what do the analytical assessments compiled to date by the BRICS Research Group reveal about overall accountability levels with the collective commitments generated by the BRICS since its inception? Although

accountability data for the BRICS is still in its infancy relative to the G20 and G7/8, some notable trends are beginning to emerge. Accountability assessments conducted by the BRICS Research Group across 16 priority issues areas from 2009–2015 reveals that the BRICS member countries have complied with the 39 priority commitments assessed at an average rate of +0.48. Accountability is highest across those issue areas related to finance at +0.80, followed by development at +0.72 and climate change at +0.67. Issue areas with the lowest overall accountability rates are those associated with matters of regional security at +0.20 and trade at –0.08 (Appendix C is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>).

The collective success of the BRICS in fulfilling several socioeconomic and energy commitments is not surprising given the similar challenges members face and coincident priorities they share, particularly in area of agricultural reform, food production and energy security. For example, beginning at their 2011 BRICS agricultural ministers meeting and since then, agreements have been regularly reached to support the development of the biomass energy industry to safeguard global food security. The BRICS countries have since then called on their industrialized counterparts to offer funding and technological support to the developing world to enhance energy strategies and agricultural production that help ensure greater food security.

Broken down by country, the highest complying BRICS member to date is China at +0.64, followed by Russia at +0.56, India at +0.54 and then Brazil and South Africa, each at +0.31. Thus, BRICS accountability performance across the priority issue areas and by country reveals that these countries have indeed generated accountability in the positive range, with a sustained and generally rising trend.

Accountability Trends across the G20 and BRICS

In comparing accountability trends across both the G20 and BRICS summits, the BRICS generated an average of 56 commitments per summit between 2009–2016; this amounts to almost one third fewer than the average of 171 commitments generated by the G20 between 2008–2016 (Appendix A and D is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>). The distribution of these commitments, however, tends to reflect the core institutional concentration of both PSIs. For example, in the case of the G20, the highest number of commitments generated are those that reflect the G20's position as a crisis response committee and the key global forum for international financial and economic cooperation. This includes, for example, those issue areas tied to macroeconomics (i.e., fiscal measures to stimulate domestic demand), financial regulation (flexible exchange rates and structural reform), and labour and employment. Moreover, G20 commitments also tend to reflect those issues related to banking capital, liquidity, derivatives, trade protectionism and reform of the global financial institutions.

Similar to the G20, the highest number of commitments generated to date by the BRICS also reflects those issues that lie at the core of its institutional agenda, primarily those associated with practical cooperation (i.e., taxation, crime, bribery and corrup-

tion), development (i.e., infrastructure development, capacity building and social protection for the poor and most vulnerable), macroeconomics (i.e., competition policy and enforcement) and energy (through the promotion of renewables and clean energy technologies). Less success tends to be generated by the BRICS on those issues tied to IFI reform and regional security. Similar to the G20 however, the BRICS has also fallen short on its ability to successfully coordinate its policies on trade protectionism, exchange rate management and climate change.

Despite their distinctive differences, the priorities by the host presidency tend to substantially influence the breakdown of commitments generated at both the G20 and BRICS. Earlier G20 summits generated significantly more commitments in those areas directly related to the 2008–09 economic crisis, as these issues mattered most at the time to those G20 hosts. As the G20 evolved over time to expand its policy breadth, so too did the volume of commitments generated outside these core economic and finance issue areas to include for example, crime and corruption, food and agriculture, energy and climate change (Appendix B is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>). Similarly, priority commitments by the BRICS have also reflected those of the host presidency, with the first Russian BRICS presidency focusing principally on issues of energy and agriculture in 2009, followed in 2010 by development issues in Brasilia, 2011 climate change in Sanya, 2012–13 regional security and development in both New Delhi and Durban respectively, socioeconomic issues in Fortaleza in 2014, energy and regional security in Ufa in 2015 and development and health issues once again in Goa 2016 (Appendix C is available at <https://iorj.hse.ru/en/2017-12-2/207994056.html>).

Also notwithstanding their distinctive differences, Marina Larionova, Mark Rakhmangulov and Andrey Shelepov note that there is a common accountability trend that exists between the G20 and BRICS summits. Delivery on their core priorities has tended to increase over time, from summit to summit across both PSIs; however, accountability with *new* commitments has often proven challenging, as have those that tend to not align with each member states' national interests, for example, on matters of trade. Self-accountability catalysts are also commonalities between the two PSIs, although more typically in the case of the G20, where the issuance of self-accountability assessments began in 2013 following the stock-taking of development commitments generated at the 2010 G20 Seoul Summit. The BRICS has used such catalysts, albeit to a lesser degree, the most notable case being in New Delhi. There, leaders requested their finance ministers to conduct a feasibility assessment of a New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Agreement (CRA) and report back to the BRICS leaders the following year at their next summit. Indeed, at the subsequent summit in Durban 2012, they acknowledged the efforts of their finance ministers on this matter and resolved to review progress on this initiative by the time of their following summit in September 2013. In this particular case, accountability with these priority commitments was indeed higher than for the rest the BRICS commitments assessed that year [Larionova, Kirton, 2014].

Clear differences in accountability catalysts, however, exist between the G20 and BRICS summit processes. The G20 complies best when it reaches commitments that refer to international law and legal instruments (for example, the 2015 Paris Climate

Agreement); when it reiterates or repeats commitments made at previous summits (remit mandates); when it conducts issue-specific ministerial meetings in advance of its G20 summits; when it identifies and embeds a core international organization within its stated commitment, for example, the UN on climate change; and when a self-accountability mechanism is established, articulated or already in place.

References to external organizations seem particularly relevant to the G20's accountability performance. Across 10 summits, a total of 1,419 references to external organizations were made in the G20's final declarations. As these references increased from 40 at their first summit in 2008 to an all-time high of 251 at the 2011 Cannes summit, so did the G20's accountability levels. This suggests that the higher the number of external references to global governance institutions, the more likely accountability with summit commitments will be [Bracht and Nguyen, forthcoming].

The empirical evidence suggests that the BRICS summit process, on the other hand, complies best when it assigns commitment mandates to its own internal bodies or working groups; when it cooperates with regional institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum; when it delegates authority to ministerial and official-level bodies, including those on foreign affairs, finance, agriculture, trade, health, education, science and technology and the environment; and when it stipulates specific timelines for commitment delivery [Bracht and Nguyen, forthcoming; Larionova, Rakhmangulov and Shelepov, forthcoming].

Captured in the aggregate, accountability levels to date have been slightly more robust by the BRICS (+0.48) than the G20 (+0.41). Both PSIs, however, have demonstrated that their individual accountability scores are generally higher with those priority commitments generated to reflect their respective core policy agendas.

Indeed, given the current limitations in the existing data for G20 and BRICS accountability, research continues to evolve which could generate new data models reflecting variations in accountability catalysts and behaviour. This may result in assessments that reflect more rigorous and robust scoring methodologies and guidelines.

Conflict or Convergence in G20 and BRICS Accountability?

Summit observers and sceptics argue that the G20, and more recently, the BRICS have fallen short on the delivery of those commitments primarily related to antiprotectionism, climate conscious development, food security, and the promise for increased equity in labour markets. This sentiment is largely based on the failure of both PSIs to produce a comprehensive accountability mechanism to track effectiveness. Criticisms in this regard vary, pointing to both groups' lack of formal authority, the absence of key accountability components (including baseline standards and quantitative reporting), a lack of cultural convergence and an overall dearth of normative values. Coupled together, these perceived obstacles make delivery on core commitments challenging, at best [Grant and Keohane, 2005].

However, for those who may argue that such intense political, economic, cultural and religious convergence makes it almost impossible to find common ground [Huntington, 1993], the argument advanced here is that this dynamic is extremely effective for both the G20 and BRICS summit processes. In other words, the diverse nature and constitution of the G20 and BRICS is in fact an *asset* rather than an impediment to consensus building, for it provides a source of *innovation and insight* not seen in other PSIs. These types of forums force the G20 and BRICS to exchange best practices, adopt new notions of consensus, embrace peer review, build more effective communications strategies, and develop a better understanding of each other's policy positions. Thus, despite their widely different approaches, these exchanges feed in a very constructive way into the core G20 and BRICS agendas, creating an effective avenue through which collaborative decisions are reached. This is not to suggest that the G20 and BRICS have reached this level of global governance maturity fully, as both these PSI, but particularly the BRICS, are still very much in their institutional infancy. But in beginning to define these new modes of global leadership and accountability, the G20 and BRICS are increasingly proving themselves to be major forces of change in global economic and political governance. This is particularly true as we find that the research analysis to date reveals that the G20 and BRICS are in fact submitting to an accountability mechanism, insofar as they are increasingly mandating their ministers, experts and working groups to report on progress made. Particularly in the case of the G20, requests are on the rise to relevant international organizations, NGOs and academic institutions to report publicly on G20 accountability. These actors in turn hold these PSIs to account on the decisions they make and the commitments they keep.

Recommendations for Enhancing Accountability Delivery

Although an overall upward accountability trend is reflected in the limited, but increasing amount of available data on the capacity of the G20 and BRICS to implement their commitments, these PSIs can take a number of practical, innovative measures to improve the implementation and accountability tasks they collectively agree on. Doing so primarily involves building consensus on a clear, specific, target-driven and time-bound set of deliverables, as well as measures and mechanisms aimed directly at improving delivery and implementation.

The first such step involves a clear recognition on the part of both the G20 and BRICS members that the commitments contained within their final summit declarations must be precise, transparent, quantifiable and target-oriented, as measurable objectives facilitate future tracking and reporting on results. Tied into this point is the criticality of self-accountability pledges which invariably draw the attention needed from the international community to create an element of peer-pressure which in turn forces leaders to act and respond to the collective commitments they make in a more positive and constructive way. Mandates containing implementation features that are reiterated over time are particularly significant in this regard as they create a shared sense of urgency for collective and coordinated action that induces compliant behaviour [Kirton, Kokotsis, 2015].

Second, and tied into the first point, is the need for adequate monitoring systems to be put in place in order to provide timely and reliable information for results-oriented reporting. This means that the G20 in particular needs to build on its recent accountability reporting structure by tracking these commitments through a clear and transparent reporting mechanism. Although early reports of this nature show promise, future reports must include common benchmarks and the provision of reliable information [Kokotsis, 2010]. The BRICS summit process lags behind the G20 in this regard, as a formal accountability structure or mechanism has yet to be established.

Third, both PSIs must continue to mandate their ministers, experts and working groups to report on progress made, given that evidence to date suggests that accountability increases when governmental bodies and ministerial working groups are tasked with rigorously monitoring commitments made [Kirton, 2017; Larionova et al., forthcoming].

Fourth, an enduring Accountability Working Group (AWG) similar to that of the G8 could play a key role in ensuring quantifiable terms, consistent methodologies and rigorous assessments. This could provide a bridge between external evaluators' assessments and G20 and BRICS self-assessments to highlight the shortcomings of each, and to synchronize the various findings.

Fifth, data limitations must be overcome, particularly in sectors where data quality is poor and activities are carried out without adequate attention to baseline data or a consistent methodology that allows for rigorous assessments.

Sixth, effective implementation goes beyond the membership boundaries of the G20 and BRICS, requiring global partnerships with non-state actors, civil society, academia, the business community and the private sector to deliver concrete and tangible results. In particular, both PSIs must acknowledge the importance of working with NGOs on the ground to implement their commitments, indicating a clear path for NGO and civil society input into the framework process.

And, finally, there needs to be a plan of action to rectify lagging progress on past commitments as well as a clearly defined strategy to speed progress in areas deemed to be falling short.

Legitimacy and leadership at any level begins with promises being kept. In this respect, the G20 and BRICS are no exception. To make their mark as international agenda setters and global governance leaders, both PSIs must seize the important opportunities they have at their annual summit gatherings to forge consensus on the key agenda items they have established, and then go one step further by showing the world they can shape and influence policy by effectively delivering on the promises they make.

Future summits thus provide a key opportunity for both the G20 and BRICS leadership to build on their global credibility by providing not only an inventory of their collective accomplishments, but engaging the broader international community and reporting on their successes in a clear, transparent and measurable way.

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«Группа двадцати» и БРИКС: повышение легитимности решений¹

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Международное сообщество сталкивается с множеством сложных и взаимосвязанных вызовов в широком спектре сфер жизнедеятельности: от экологии, международной безопасности и экономики до вопросов здравоохранения и содействия развитию. Решение этих проблем требует совместных усилий наиболее влиятельных политических лидеров из ведущих государств мира.

Таким образом, для осуществления вышеозначенных функций необходимо выработать процесс глобального управления, в рамках которого лидеры государств могли бы проводить регулярные встречи и достигать консенсуса по важнейшим вопросам мировой повестки дня.

В статье утверждается, что для осознания ценности и важности подобных многосторонних институтов высокого уровня необходимо понимать причины и возможности осуществления функций глобального управления «Группой двадцати» и БРИКС.

Также, по мнению автора, вышеозначенные институты должны формировать консенсус и принимать конкретные обязательства, исполнение которых могло бы быть эффективно оценено. В отсутствие критериев оценки реализации принятых обязательств остро встает вопрос о легитимности этих объединений.

В рамках данной дискуссии ключевое значение имеет вопрос о способности и желании «Группы двадцати» и БРИКС сотрудничать или конкурировать между собой и с другими международными организациями и многосторонними неформальными институтами. В этой связи интерес вызывает и возможное влияние данных процессов на эффективность механизмов подотчетности. В настоящей работе утверждается, что для успешного осуществления лидерских функций в системе глобального управления «двадцатка» и БРИКС должны работать в тесной связке друг с другом и с другими ключевыми региональными, многосторонними, межправительственными и неправительственными организациями, институтами гражданского общества, деловыми ассоциациями и представителями академического сообщества. Только путем расширенного сотрудничества рассматриваемые неформальные многосторонние институты могут заручиться достаточной поддержкой международного сообщества на достаточном для эффективной реализации целей глобального развития уровне.

Ключевые слова: «Группа двадцати»; БРИКС; саммиты; глобальное управление; институты; легитимность; лидерство; обязательства; подотчетность

Для цитирования: Кокотсис Э. (2017) «Группа двадцати» и БРИКС: повышение легитимности решений // Вестник международных организаций. 2017. Т. 12. № 2. С. 194–210. DOI: 10.17323/1996-7845-2017-02-195

¹ Статья поступила в редакцию в октябре 2016 г.

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