

Building G20 Outreach: The Role of Transnational Policy Networks in Sustaining Effective and Legitimate Summitry

Steven Slaughter

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia. E-mail: slaughts@deakin.edu.au

G20 outreach processes, in the form of the Think 20, Labour 20, Business 20, and Civil 20, Youth 20, and Women 20, are a formal attempt by G20 leaders to engage various social sectors with G20 policymaking. This essay contends that G20 outreach processes are best understood as transnational policy networks, which are involved in widening the field of policy communication and deliberation. The importance of these transnational policy networks rest upon their role in developing and disseminating G20 policy priorities and principles; and are an attempt to enhance the legitimacy and influence of the G20 and its policy proposals.

We agree that, in order to strengthen its ability to build and sustain the political consensus needed to respond to challenges, the G20 must remain efficient, transparent and accountable. To achieve this, we decide to . . . pursue consistent and effective engagement with non-members, regional and international organisations, including the United Nations, and other actors, and we welcome their contribution to our work as appropriate. We also encourage engagement with civil society.

[G20 Cannes Summit Final Declaration 2011 \(G20 2011\)](#)

The difficulty in balancing the effectiveness and representativeness of the Group of Twenty (G20) has led to sustained questions about its legitimacy (Cooper 2010; Rudd 2011; Cooper and Pouliot 2015). Consequently, while leaders have long sought external advice about the agendas of Group of Seven (G7) summits since 1975, and about the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors' meetings (G20 FM/CBG) since 1999, there has been intensification, elaboration, and institutionalization of transnational networks of policymakers with respect to the G20 in recent years. These networks are especially evident in the form of the G20 working groups and G20 outreach processes involved in the G20 FM/CBG and the G20 leaders' forum created in 2008.

G20 working groups include transgovernmental groups of government officials and outside experts within a specific policy area who are charged with preparing material for G20 deliberations. G20 outreach processes are a recent and more formal attempt by G20 leaders to engage various social sectors with the policymaking activity of the G20 and were first considered by the G20 membership in 2010 with a more formal engagement with business interests. This led to the formal development of G20 outreach groups in 2013 in the form of the Think 20 (think tanks), Labour 20, Business 20, Civil 20 and Youth 20, which include representatives from these sectors. In 2015, a Women 20 outreach group was also added. These outreach processes are

best understood as transnational policy networks which have been built to support the G20's capacity to be effective and legitimate.

This essay focuses on G20 outreach processes and examines why and how the G20 has sought to augment its intergovernmental summitry and transgovernmental working groups with transnational policy networks, purposely involving a range of societal interests. Transnational policy networks demonstrate the existence of policymaking practices which include the policy influence of experts and advocates outside government. These networks also indicate the ways in which governments, International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and summits like the G20 engage society, or where elements of society engage themselves with the policymaking process (Stone 2008). These networks intersect with the intergovernmental activities of leaders and key diplomats, and overlap with the transgovernmental relationships of various levels of government bureaucrats (Baker 2009). One of the principle features of transnational policy networks is the way they create and channel the communication of political ideas and priorities. However, it is important to keep in the mind the purpose and power of actors involved in the network and consider who has the discretion and motivation to create the network in the first instance. As the G20 members stated in 2012, the aspiration for outreach is founded upon an intent to strengthen the G20's capacity "to build and sustain the political consensus". Consequently, it is important to consider how the development of transnational policy networks in the form of G20 outreach processes are able to sustain the effectiveness and legitimacy of the G20.

This essay contends that G20 outreach processes are best understood as transnational policy networks. These networks have been built to widen the field of policy communication and deliberation. Furthermore, these outreach processes and networks are an attempt to enhance the legitimacy and influence of the G20 and its policy proposals. While there is no doubt that outreach practices are "ad hoc responses to the widespread charge that the G20 reproduces the politics of exclusion in global governance" (Cooper and Pouliot 2015, 347), these practices have the potential to improve both the effectiveness and legitimacy of the G20. The G20 possesses uncertain legitimacy and members of the G20 demonstrate an awareness of this and a corresponding willingness to actively develop various political practices to support the capacity and legitimacy of the G20.

However, G20 outreach also enables the G20 to place some limit upon the policy narratives and ideas that develop within these policy networks. The G20 is liable to be misunderstood without examining the activity of these transnational networks because the G20 is fundamentally a deliberative policy forum rather than a negotiating forum of binding regulations. Transnational policy networks have the potential to scrutinize and amplify relevant policy ideas and thereby enhance the legitimacy of the G20 and strengthen the capacity of the G20 to address an array of global economic and social problems. However, while some narrative control is important to amplify the G20 agenda, too much narrative control will undermine its legitimacy and capacity to develop broad-based responses to global problems. This essay explores the formation of these transnational policy networks by first outlining the evolution of the purpose and configuration of the G20, then it considers the ways G20 outreach processes constitute transnational policy networks and why they have been established, and

lastly, analyses how these networks operate to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G20.

The Evolution of the G20

The G20 leader's forum was developed in response to the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) and has acted as a key site for policy coordination and deliberation among the nineteen Member States, the President of the European Union (EU), and the heads of a range of IGOs. Importantly, the G20 and preceding forums of the G system are established and operate outside the protocols of international law or the United Nations' (UN) system and have no constitution, ongoing secretariat or budget and, therefore, no capacity to act independent of Member States. As such, the G20 is a forum for economic diplomacy and policy coordination, which involves executive leaders at the annual summits. These summits enable various informal forms of dialogue between world leaders and produce mutually agreed policy priorities, which are expressed in a communiqué and are subsequently meant to be enacted by member governments. This development has been referred to as the "rise of the informals", whereby formal diplomacy and existing IGOs are being supplemented by the informal summitry of world leaders and other government officials (Alexandroff and Brean 2015, 9). The central purpose of the G20 is to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and policy coordination amongst economically significant states that responds to economic crises and stabilizes the global economy. While G7/8 and G20 meetings have been lauded for the flexible and informal manner in which leaders can meet, they have always involved the work of senior diplomats, referred to as "Sherpas", who meet before the summit of world leaders to prepare the agenda.

While there have been discussions about whether the G20 needs a permanent secretariat to systematically process the information relevant to the issues it confronts (Cooper 2012, 17), these discussions have not been widely supported. However, there has been long-standing agreement (since the formation of the G20 FM/CBG) to create a "Troika" of the host country plus the previous host and forthcoming host to enable some consistency of the policy agenda across different hosts. The host country plays an important function in setting the agenda of a G20 summit and thereby establish the policy issues to be discussed and prioritized. Furthermore, the formation of the G20 FM/CBG forum, in 1999, saw a greater array of officials and experts involved in preparations for the meetings of finance ministers, including representatives from key IGOs (Baker 2009, 203). The formation of the G20 leaders' forum in 2008 stemmed from the belief that effective and swift intergovernmental coordination required an informal body outside of the existing multilateral IGOs which was broader in membership than the G8 (Kharas and Lombardi 2012, 6). This action still required detailed policy prescriptions to come from existing IGOs and forms of global governance, which "necessarily entailed an intensification of the network relationships that already existed between the G20 and a broad array of IOs, technical agencies and networks" (Eccleston, Kellow, and Carroll 2013, 299).

Consequently, since the creation of the G20 leaders' forum, there has been the rapid development of new processes to inform the agenda of summits without creating a formal secretariat or adding new permanent members.

These new processes include the G20 working groups. These groups encompass groups of experts and regulators from member countries within a specific policy area who are charged with preparing material for the deliberations of Sherpas and leaders. Such working groups have been involved with the G20 FM/CBG since its inception but have been elaborated significantly since the formation of the leader's forum. G20 working groups stemmed from the earliest preparation for the G20 FM/CBG. Indeed, one of the earliest experiments in creating a body to move beyond the membership of the G8 to include emerging economies in order to respond to the Asian Financial Crisis was the G-22 (Group of 22/ the "Willard Group") in 1997 where:

... ministers and governors commissioned three working groups to examine possible action in three areas: increasing transparency and disclosure; strengthening financial systems and market structures, particularly in emerging economies; and achieving appropriate burden-sharing between the official and private sectors in the event of a crisis (G20 History Study Group 2007, 13).

These largely transgovernmental groups of experts and regulators proved influential in the subsequent establishment of the G20 because the "success of the G-22's working groups demonstrated the value of fresh, practical and less institutionally based dialogue and cooperation" and it has become the standard practice that working groups are generally co-chaired by one advanced and one emerging economy (Kharas and Lombardi 2012, 3). The chairs of these working groups invite relevant experts from IGOs, standard setting bodies, business, and academia. With the elevation of the G20 to a leaders' forum, working groups have expanded into new areas of policy-making removed from a narrow focus in financial issues, such as anti-corruption, development, and employment.

More recently, the G20 has engaged with non-Member States and a wider group of interests. G20 outreach groups demonstrate forms of engagement with groups and networks not traditionally involved in the agenda or operation of G20 summits. The predecessors of the G20 had various forms of intersection with the public of Member States, business interests, and transnational civil society. These interactions were largely unsystematic. During the early years of the G7, organized business interests like the Trilateral Commission were influential despite few formal connections (Gill 1991). Also while the G7 did not initially engage with civil society and the public, it became clear during the mid-1990s that globalization was becoming an issue of public concern and that leaders "had to counter public fears about globalisation, where their populations worried at becoming vulnerable to external forces beyond their control" (Bayne 2000).

These were themes that reappeared in the G8 summits during the 2000s in the form of significant levels of protest associated with the anti-capitalist movement. Nevertheless, various G8 summits had different levels of engagement with civil society, with the G8 meetings in Genoa held in 2001 and Gleneagles in 2005 being examples of disengagement and engagement respectively (Cooper 2013, 188). However, business interests did become more organized in 2006 when the German peak business group proposed regular meetings of the business organizations of Member States to make recommendations before each G8 summit. This was expanded to the G20 in 2008 and has been institutionalized in the form of an annual meeting that is held just before the G20 summit since 2010 (B20 2011). Furthermore, civil

society groups have been quicker to realize the potential of the G20 to advance their causes than they were with the G8 (Cooper 2013, 180).

Consequently, the G20 membership has also increased efforts to create formalized procedures of engagement and outreach with civil society and other sectors. The 2010 G20 Seoul Summit Leaders' Declaration stated that:

We recognize, given the broad impact of our decisions, the necessity to consult with the wider international community. We will increase our efforts to conduct G20 consultation activities in a more systematic way, building on constructive partnerships with international organizations, in particular the UN, regional bodies, civil society, trade unions and academia (G20 2010).

When it hosted the G20 in 2012, Mexico played a key role in implementing broader outreach practices to think tanks, labour, and youth (Cooper and Thakur 2013, 113). This recognition has been demonstrated by the formalized development of the Think 20, Labour 20, Business 20, Civil 20, and Youth 20 at the 2013 St Petersburg Summit (G20 2013). These networks have coalesced around the aspiration for G20 Member States to receive inputs from these various constituencies from a series of meetings prior to G20 summits on a wide range of topics.¹ This formalized outreach practices were replicated in the 2014 and 2015 summits and systematic processes of engagement of these outreach groups with their respective sectors were developed. For instance, the lead up to the 2014 Brisbane Summit involved the development of an elaborate website where people involved with civil society could register and choose the issues that the Civil 20 should focus upon and collate reports and perspectives about these issues. The Civil 20 convened a two-day summit on the chosen themes, which included representative from various NGOs and religious groups from Australia and the world (C20 2014). This information was collated into a Civil 20 Communiqué which declared the Civil 20 priorities, and alongside the reports from other outreach groups, subsequently informed the preparations for the G20 summit.

G20 Outreach as Transnational Policy Networks

The G20 outreach processes have demonstrated that the G20 is not just an intergovernmental summit working along with transgovernmental working groups. The G20 has taken on an increasingly complicated and institutionalized form where outreach groups operate as transnational policy networks. Akin to an "iceberg", there are considerable types of formal and informal activity beneath the activity of leaders in G20 summitry (Alexandroff and Brean 2015, 9–10). Transgovernmentalism refers to the existence of "bureaucratic contacts" which take place below the executive decision makers in national governments which lead to the development of sustained networks between various levels and agencies of the involved governments and

¹ The Civil 20 alone had seven topics in 2013: Group 1 – Food Security; Group 2 – Anti-corruption; Group 3 – Post-MDGs; Group 4 – Financial Inclusion and Financial Education; Group 5 – Environmental Sustainability and Energy; Group 6 – Jobs and Employment; Group 7 – International Financial Architecture. (G20 2013). In 2014, the Civil 20 focused on four policy themes: (1) Inclusive Growth and Employment, (2) Infrastructure, (3) Climate and Sustainability, and (4) Governance (C20 2014).

IGOs, which consequently influence policymaking in specific issues (Baker 2009, 198–200). Such activity has been a significant part of the global financial architecture comprising the various technical institutions that have been developed to stabilize global financial systems in recent decades.

However, while these transgovernmental relationships and working groups with respect to the G20 increase the flow of information, there are still questions about the ways these networks and technical institutions remain elitist, exclusionary, and publicly opaque. While the formation of the G20 did indicate “a movement toward a greater degree of representation and inclusion in global financial governance”, a key challenge has been “to broaden representation and create more inclusive deliberative spaces that reflect a broader range of affected interests” (Baker 2009, 2010–1). G20 outreach is a key way the G20 has attempted to make global governance more transparent, by attempting to make these forms of societal outreach operate as transnational policy networks. Importantly these forms of outreach are not open-ended forums for political debates. Rather they are focused on practical policy issues relevant to the G20 agenda.

The existence and operation of transnational policy networks involving governments, experts, and the public are not limited to the G20. A variety of transnational networks are clearly operating within global governance and have been involved in novel forms of transnational rule setting and policy making (Slaughter 2004, Hale and Held 2011, Alexandroff and Brean 2015). Transnational policy networks are a specific form of political practice which include:

... multilevel polycentric forms of public policy in which a plethora of institutions and networks negotiate within and between international agreements and private regimes [which] have emerged as pragmatic responses in the absence of formal global governance. ... This is a double devolution; first, beyond the nation-state to global and regional domains; and second, a delegation of authority to private networks and nonstate actors (Stone 2008, 24).

This understanding acknowledges the ways policymaking includes individuals and agencies beyond government, with respect to the ways governments, IGOs, and summits like the G20 engage society or where elements of society constructively engage the policymaking process. Transnational policy networks can take on different forms and are determined by specific drivers, which include the types of individuals involved in the conceptualization and communication of specific policy problems and solutions (Slaughter 2004). Dianne Stone (2008, 30–1) contends that transnational public policy networks include:

- “internationalized public sector officials”: diplomats, public officials, and regulators engaged in international issues and networks;
- “international civil servants”: officials working for IGOs; and
- “transnational policy professionals”: “consultants, foundation officers, business leaders, scientific experts, think tank pundits, and NGO executives.”

While these networks are persistent social forms involved in communicating policy ideas, they often operate without firm connections to authority or overt forms of power. As such, these networks are broader than transgovernmental networks and work within and across governments, societies,

and IGOs to transmit information and ideas with respect to particular policy problems.

Specific transnational policy networks are shaped by particular dynamics. One crucial dynamic is whether the participants in these networks act on the basis of their expertise and knowledge, or on the basis that they claim to represent a particular interest, whether it is an industry, or a public group or concern. While expertise of a technical or scientific character can certainly be used to promote particular political ends, individuals drawn from technical fields are subject to professional oversight and review, which introduces a unique source of influence different from activists or business lobbyists (Stone 2008, 31–3). It is also the case that advocacy groups have a variety of influential strategies that rest upon their moral authority and their willingness to use these tactics to put public pressure on authority (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As such, an important issue is whether a transnational policy network is open to advocacy groups or just experts.

Another dynamic which shapes the nature of transnational policy networks is the determination of what agency initiates the network in the first place and thereby establishes the agenda of the network. The question of which agent or agents have the initiative or the institutional and structural power to constitute a network shapes the initial purpose and parameters of any network. While networks demonstrate various forms of interdependency, and crises in a specific policy area can provide a powerful impetus for cooperation, a crucial question is whether networks are initiated and requested by governments, or whether governments are dependent upon sectoral or public groups with respect to a given policy issue.

It is important to further consider why these policy networks have been created and elaborated with respect to the G20. One factor is that the G20 has problems converting its flexible and informal nature into coherent policy platforms that persist over the course of several summits with different host countries determining priorities. Transgovernmental working groups are a key measure aimed at allowing the G20 to access broader forms of information and promote some consistency and continuation of its policy coordination role across different summits. This enables the G20 to have a greater presence in policy debates and thus provides greater reassurance about the capacity and effectiveness of the G20 in responding to economic crises. However, another factor reinforcing the development of a coherent policy agenda is the importance of being seen to be inclusive, transparent, and legitimate. The outreach processes have played an important role in this regard. As Susan Harris Rimmer indicates (2014, 12):

The effectiveness/efficiency claims of the G20 have been built on the idea of a small, compact and self-selected membership which can move relatively quickly to make decisions. However, the legitimacy of a global governance actor usually rests on broad claims of representation, or a universal mandate (an example is the United Nations). The solution for the G20 is to keep its current membership, but improve its outreach to a greater number and wider array of state, private sector and civil society actors, and increase accountability measures at the leader level.

Creating a sense that the G20 is not an illegitimate and secretive club of wealthy states is crucial for the G20 to persuade Member and non-Member States of the importance of its policy priorities. The outreach processes of the G20 perform an important role in broadening the sources of information

that feed into the summits by accessing a wider array of perspectives and information to legitimize the existence of the G20 and make more effective policy.

The key question is why has the development of transnational policy networks in the form of outreach processes been seen to be important to increasing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G20? There are three important background conditions that have led to the development of transnational policy networks with respect to the G20 and global governance more broadly. The first is due to the ways many states have disaggregated policymaking because of changes in ideology, such as the rise of neo-liberalism, in which elements of state policymaking are deregulated or contracted out (Bevir 2013). There have also been rising levels of complexity in many policy areas so that governments do not have expertise or resources to regulate and coordinate all policy areas. As such, it is important to see the state as a “disaggregated” entity of different agencies where policymaking is interconnected between states at different levels (Slaughter 2004, 5). The operation of a global economy and the ability to address an array of transnational risks depends upon transnational networks forming from the interaction of these government agencies and experts, NGOs, and interests groups.

Secondly, transnational policy networks are also facilitated by the continued development of transnational civil society and notions of a global public sphere. While transnational forms of activism and civil society have a long history, the presence, activity, and variety of transnational NGOs has escalated in the last few decades as the costs of organizing and publicizing activity have decreased (Dryzek 2011, 215-16). This activity is due to the existence of information technology and global systems of media, which enables communication and dialogue via various technologies, media actors and frameworks, and includes the activity of civil society groups and social movements with an array of political agendas. Stone (2008, 21) refers to this context as a “global agora” to emphasize that civic activity and the market overlap each other and that it allows civil society groups to participate in global policy deliberations.

The third background condition is that multilateral cooperation has been increasingly ineffective in recent decades, leading governments to explore other alternatives such as transnational policy networks. Clearly, national interests, sovereignty, and multilateralism still largely define the contours of global governance. However, in many respects multilateralism was so successful in enabling interdependence and globalization with regard to a growing number of states, that this system has become overloaded and gridlocked (Hale and Held 2012; Cooper and Thakur 2013, 1-9). It is also the case that many areas of global governance have significant domestic implications that complicate and frustrate international cooperation. The difficulties in advancing free trade within the World Trade Organization and in advancing a binding multilateral response to climate change are often cited as key examples (Hale and Held 2011, 3). While the G20 is intended to avoid the problems of large-scale multilateralism, greater awareness of economic interdependence between the world’s major economies and concerns about the efficacy of existing forms of multilateralism have led to new forms of transnational governance, including networks of policymakers to deliberate and coordinate policy. Consequently, these more low-profile forms of

technical cooperation and coordination have been advanced as alternatives or supplements to grand multilateral agreements.

Within this general context, transnational policy networks with respect to the G20 have been developed and have become more elaborate and institutionalized because of the increasing profile of the G20 in the aftermath of the GFC and resulting questions about its legitimacy. The challenges of legitimacy have been issues for the G20 and the G7/8 since their respective inceptions. The reason why these issues have become especially acute, such that working groups and outreach processes have been further developed, relates to factors external and internal to the G20.

One principle external or “outside in” factor for the development of more elaborate forms of policy networks is that the G20 has been taken seriously by states and agencies outside of its narrow membership. After the G20 was elevated to a leader’s forum in 2008, it attracted interest because of its rising profile and apparent success in galvanizing international cooperation in response to the GFC. Pre-existing policy networks working on topics like tax transparency attempted to engage with the G20 after its formation for this reason (Eccleston, Kellow, and Carroll 2013, 299). Despite the rising profile of the G20, there have been a range of questions about the legitimacy of the G20’s membership and activity. These concerns encompass both the international legitimacy of the G20 from the perspective of states excluded from the G20, as well as public concerns about the power of the G20. This has led to external calls for the G20 to develop greater forms of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

The desire of external interests to be heard in the G20 was accompanied by an internal or “inside out” factor for the development of G20 outreach as a framework of transnational policy networks, in which Member States sought to increase the profile of the G20 and communicate and legitimize its role to outside audiences. These impulses were a result of a downturn in the appeal of the G20 since the 2010 Toronto Summit and the early successes in response to the GFC (Drezner 2014). Since then, the G20 presented “more mixed if not completely pessimistic experiences” compared with early summits, and the lessening of the immediate urgency of the GFC in which the “common purpose that united the G20 leaders seemed less present” (Cooper 2012, 13). It certainly appeared that without the galvanizing effect of a crisis, the G20 lacked impetus for policy action, especially with regard to implementing economic reforms designed to prevent future crises. Consequently, while there have been signs that the G20 can be an effective but reactive “crisis committee”, there are questions whether the G20 can be a “steering committee” that can act to prevent global economic problems (Cooper 2010).

But, importantly, these concerns are accompanied by a clear desire to avoid creating a secretariat for the G20 (Cooper and Bradford 2010, 5). The development of policy networks in the form of outreach processes are evidence of attempts by Member States and participating IGOs to shift the capacities of G20 in a proactive direction due to these external and internal factors. G20 outreach processes, as well as working groups, have the capacity to create and sustain political agendas to influence leaders who are often removed from the technical policy detail which underpin these agendas and promote G20 policy ideas within member societies. It is important to see G20 outreach processes as transnational policy networks precisely because these processes are transnational, disaggregated, and operate outside the

normal channels of government and multilateralism, yet they still perform key roles of communicating policy relevant information.

How Transnational Policy Networks Act to Promote G20 Legitimacy

The communicative aspects of policy networks are crucial to legitimizing and enhancing the operation of the G20. Policy networks play an important role in relating policy relevant information to decision makers by including relevant actors, but also by placing some control and filter on the policy ideas and political narratives involved. Narratives are the stories that participants use to “make sense of their worlds” which develop around political problems and justify recommendations for policy responses (Bevir 2013, 8). When governments initiate a policy network and establish the parameters for its agenda and the narratives involved, it does so for three key reasons. These reasons overlap in practice.

First, governments may lack knowledge about a specific policy issue and seek to include multiple voices to gather a broader range of information and expertise. For reasons noted above, there is a range of policy areas where governments have deregulated in recent decades and which require input from the sectors which are involved in economic activity. Bringing various perspectives and forms of expertise into the policymaking process can also broaden the confidence and credibility of policy outcomes. Secondly, governments may seek to actively create connections with relevant sectoral or public groups to promote the legitimacy of their activity. In particular, in democratic states there are strong expectations that governments will engage (and be seen to engage) with relevant groups and open up channels of transparent communication, and perhaps even some form of public accountability, to forestall public protest or discontent. These purposes are clearly pressing for the G20 and indicate a need to engage groups likely to be affected by any proposed policy direction. In the case of a new forum like the G20, this also encompasses the development of policy networks to publicize the existence and purpose of these summits within the context of national and global priorities.

While both these reasons are in play with respect to the formation of transnational policy networks and the G20, a third reason is that policy networks can enhance the influence and dissemination of G20 policy ideas. The development of policy networks associated with the G20 reveal the key ways that the G20 is primarily a deliberative form of global governance, because the G20’s power and capacity ultimately rests on its capacity to “consult and cultivate, not command and control” (Cooper and Thakur 2013, 113). Because the G20 is flexible and relatively informal, and has no constitutional foundation, its influence stems from the informal nature of its deliberations and the degree to which these deliberations influence member governments, rather than any direct capacity to compel governments to act in specific ways.

Consequently, understanding the power of G20 in national and global contexts requires a nuanced view of power evident in Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall’s typology of “compulsory power”, “institutional power”, “structural power”, and “productive power” (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 13–22). The power of G20 does not rest primarily in the idea of “compulsory

power”, which includes direct attempts to influence the actions of another actor through direct threats or legal compulsion. Rather the G20 could be seen to have some “institutional power”, where actors are able to exercise control via formal or informal institutions, which set the policy agenda. However, there are questions regarding the legitimacy of the G20 because it excludes many states and operates outside of the universal UN system. There appears to be clearer signs of elements of “structural power” in the operation of the G20 where G20 summits are able to influence the capacities of other actors by creating an array of incentives to act in specific ways. This is evident in the ways these summits can direct IGOs like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to create specific policies for states to utilize. This can be regarded as a “plate spinning role”, which has been important across the history of the G system (Dobson 2007, 89), and evident in G20-led efforts to strengthen the capacity of the IMF in response to the GFC.

The deliberative nature of the G20 demonstrates its “productive power”, in which it is able to indirectly influence and produce particular social capacities of member and non-member governments. Therefore, inclusion in G20 outreach processes can certainly have a “disciplinary” influence over those involved in the various networks, which induces compliance (Cooper and Pouliot 2015, 347). This occurs through the development of political narratives and policy discourses that help frame political action with respect to specific issues. It is evident in the capacity of the G20 to establish the parameters of debate with reference to key issues in global economic governance and actively “endorse” specific policy ideas in global and national contexts and thereby embed states in this context (Eccleston, Kellow, and Carroll 2013, 301–3).

In particular, G20 communiqués like those stemming from the G8 are key “outputs” and can reflect deliberations where participating leaders and officials have been prompted to “reconstruct their interests” or “reorder their policy priorities” (Pigman and Kotsopoulos 2007, 139). The resulting discourse can be used to support the case for domestic reform in line with G20 deliberations. It appears that the capacity of the G20 to act as a locus to promote specific policy discourses, especially in the form of G20 communiqués, can promote ideas and priorities. G20 outreach groups act as transnational policy networks and thereby play a crucial role in focusing the policy narratives on the problems facing the G20 leaders, thereby enhancing and disseminating the policy ideas of G20 summitry. This is evident in three aspects of the operation of the G20 and in the impact of emerging transnational policy networks in the form of G20 outreach.

First, the G20 can act to *endorse policy ideas* existing within broader discussions regarding global governance. This “endorsement function” is evident in the ways the G20 provides “high profile support for the agendas and work of other specialist agencies and IOs” with respect to a range of issues (Eccleston, Kellow, and Carroll 2013, 301–3). We can see, for example, that recent efforts to address international tax transparency have been boosted by the G20’s endorsement of the “tax transparency” policy idea, which has been evident in OECD deliberations for over ten years as an attempt to increase cooperation with regards to minimizing tax evasion by transnational business (Eccleston, Kellow, and Carroll 2013, 306–9).

The G20 has also considered broader policy ideas such as the narrative of “inclusive growth” which focuses upon not just the rate of economic growth but its distribution, so as to address the economic aspects of inequality

(Burrow et al 2014, 18). While it is early in the history of G20 outreach efforts, these networks have engaged with these discourses. The 2014 Civil 20 Summit discussed both these policy ideas and the resulting Civil 20 Summit Communiqué focused on tax avoidance as a central issue of its “governance” agenda and made twelve references to inclusive growth. It recommended “that the G20 commit to inclusive growth as stated in the St Petersburg Declaration by inserting the language of inequality into the framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth” (C20 2014, 2). The G20 endorsement of policy ideas is augmented by the activity of G20 outreach groups acting as policy networks to deliberate, scrutinize, and disseminate these ideas.

Secondly, such endorsement ultimately depends upon having an important *domestic validation dynamic* to it, in the sense that the purpose of the G20 is to ensure that policy ideas are transmitted to domestic political practice. Like the preceding parts of the G system, the G20 was intended to provide international support for domestic reform. Indeed, Raghuram Rajan, currently the head of India’s Reserve Bank, stated that the purpose of the G20 is to “insert the international dimension into each country’s domestic policy debate and reform” (cited in Berggruen and Gardels 2012, 157). This is especially important given the different political cultures of the Member States of the G20.

Australia’s effort in 2014 to promote a 2% target for further economic growth was directly connected to an effort to promote a range of domestic economic reforms within the Member States of the G20 and, not unsurprisingly, the Business 20 outreach group championed this aspect of the G20 agenda (Burrow et al 2014, 7). Goals such as these are dependent on G20 outreach playing a more general role of warding against protectionism by informing the public of benefits of economic coordination and reform, as well as amplifying the policy ideas articulated by the G20. As Heather Smith, the Australian G20 Sherpa, claimed: “we look to those outside government not just to inform policy, but to help make it successful”, and for this to occur, the work of these outreach groups “will have maximum impact if it is targeted, actionable and pursues real outcomes” (Burrow et al 2014, 4).

Thirdly, outreach processes could also assist in the dissemination of G20 policy ideas by performing a *peer review* form of accountability of the commitments made by G20 leaders. This is by far the most underdeveloped aspect of the G20 outreach processes operating as transnational policy networks. G20 outreach can play a role of enhancing the transparency of the meetings and processes leading up to the G20 leaders’ summit and by providing inputs into this agenda setting process, but questions remaining about tracking compliance of states with G20 agreements. While it is too early in the history of G20 outreach to suggest the role that the various outreach groups could play in developing forms of accountability, the G20 would benefit from a common framework to clearly state common standards and measures of compliance with G20 declarations.

One option is further utilizing the compliance reports of the G20 Research Group at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. Another suggestion is enhancing the importance of the G20 “Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth” which was first suggested in 2009 as a common rubric to establish a formalized procedure for identifying shared policy objectives, and to provide a process by which G20 Member

States review and report their performance against shared objectives (Callaghan 2013a, 11, 2013b, 7). These accountability initiatives are practices that could productively intersect and provide information to the G20 outreach processes to ensure that policy ideas and suggestions build upon existing promises and past performance of G20 members.

There is a sense that the G20 members have been proactive and keen to control the terms of engagement with various sectoral interests, rather than have some groups protest the existence of the G20, or wait for these groups to try to autonomously influence the direction of the G20, or be subject to the possible development of various forms of parliamentary oversight of G20 activity. Outreach processes are exercises in narrative control in the sense that they open up pathways of communication in ways that place some limits and structure on types and forms of narratives that can be expressed and thereby influence G20 summits. Rather than create open-ended terms of engagement or strong forms of accountability, the intent here has been to build fairly focused networks, which permit a narrower field of narratives to feed directly into the preparations and the activity of G20 summits.

While transnational policy connections have operated within the G20 since the operation of working groups at the G20 FMCBG, transnational policy networks have intensified and become institutionalized in the form of outreach groups to enable this focus. It is especially interesting to see the creation of formalized outreach processes with groups that the G7/8 and G20 have historically had little official connection, especially with regards to civil society, labour, and the youth demographic. The desire to communicate with a wider range of interests is clearly related to efforts to entrench the existence of the G20 and deepen engagement with the national governance of Member States in a way that enhances the legitimacy of the G20 without constraining its power and influence. These networks play an important role of publicizing the existence of the G20 and legitimizing the structural power of the G20, as well as providing outlets whereby the productive power of G20 policy principles and priorities can more rapidly disseminate beyond the national policymaking of G20 governments.

While it is early in the operation of these G20 outreach processes, there are some issues which are important for these transnational policy networks to be effective. It is important to observe that not all outreach groups are equal in terms of access and coherence. With regard to access, it appears that the Business 20 has special access to the G20 process in the early operation of the G20 compared to other forms of outreach (Price-Thomas 2014). In terms of coherence, it is no surprise that the Business 20 and Labour 20 have strong terms of congruity as they draw upon pre-existing transnational networks of influence and stronger collective world views than what is evident in the diverse views within the Civil 20. Indeed, how outreach groups conduct and moderate internal debates within their relevant sectors about contentious policy issues will be important to the coherence of the input able to be passed onto the G20 process. It is also important to emphasize that within outreach groups, the voice of large organized actors appear to be potentially problematic. For example, within the Civil 20, the role of large NGOs with dedicated staff in respect to smaller NGOs will be important because the considerable influence and agility of large NGOs has been evident with respect to civil society interactions with the G8 and global governance more broadly (Cooper 2013, 181). The ability of these transnational policy

networks to balance representing the diversity and power differentials of their sectors and providing coherent and useful inputs will be an ongoing challenge.

Conclusion

Referring to G20 outreach processes as transnational policy networks is important. Such an approach emphasizes the transnational nature of these disaggregated but persistent forms of communication that perform a role in developing and disseminating G20 policy priorities and principles. Transnational policy networks help develop a more accurate picture of the G20 by focusing on the deliberative and communicative aspects of the G20's influence and revealing the ways intergovernmental summits are nested within various transgovernmental and transnational policy networks which are becoming more formal and more established. However, given the technical and exclusive nature of working groups and the recent development of outreach groups, there is still much research to be done to examine the impact and significance of these networks.

It will be important over time to examine how inclusive these networks are, and whether they enable some balance between avoiding an overload of policy ideas for G20 leaders and suppressing politically inconvenient policy ideas. In particular, outreach groups are an opportunity to include societal interests in the deliberations of global financial governance, so it will be important that the proposals advanced by various outreach group networks are treated equally. It will be also vital that the outreach processes do not become a sham ritual aimed only at "rubber stamping" the activity of the G20 and thereby failing to develop a deliberative two way form of communication about key policy issues. In particular, it will be important that civil society groups are not co-opted by these processes – thereby restricting their freedom to question and challenge G20 priorities. There is also a range of questions about whether outreach processes could intersect with working groups in a more transparent fashion. Further research will enable a more fine-grained assessment of the narratives within these networks, and the narratives that are excluded, to consider whether these networks can legitimate and enhance the G20.

Despite these concerns, the possibilities of these transnational policy networks are considerable. Clearly, efforts to further increase the involvement of experts and advocates in G20 processes are a necessary and important part of addressing complicated issues. Furthermore, outreach processes represent the possibility of including sectors otherwise largely discounted by policymakers and "lock in" engagement with groups like civil society, labour and youth despite some governments of the G20 not having strong democratic traditions. But more significantly, the inclusion of neglected sectors into the G20 is important to broaden the appeal of the G20 to a wider range of groups and, as noted previously, to enable G20 policy priorities to circulate more widely. While some argue that a narrow focus on financial aspects of global governance is crucial for G20 credibility and effectiveness (Callaghan 2013), the G20 could be a locus for more sustained forms of deliberation with regards to critical global issues and communication of the broader concerns of those affected by G20 derived decisions (Carin and Shorr 2013). Ultimately these policy networks have the possibility of

enhancing the legitimacy and the effectiveness of the G20 to address global social and economic issues, as well as move beyond a reactive crisis avoidance role to a more proactive crisis prevention role. While questions remain as to whether these networks can promote increased forms of public oversight and accountability of the G20, and include marginalized groups affected by G20 deliberations, it certainly appears that policy networks enable avenues by which the G20's legitimacy and capacity can be improved.

Works Cited

- Alexandroff, Alan, and Donald Brean. 2015. Global summitry: Its meaning and scope part one. *Global Summitry* 1(1):1–26.
- B20. 2011. Cannes Business 20 Summit. <http://www.b20businesssummit.com/b20/g20>
- Baker, Andrew. 2009. Deliberative equality and the transgovernmental politics of the global financial architecture. *Global Governance* (April–June 2009) 15(2):195–218.
- Barnett, Michael, and Raymond Duvall, eds. 2005. *Power in global governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bayne, Nicholas. 2000. The G8 and the Globalisation Challenge. Paper presented at the Academic Symposium G8 2000, Okinawa, July 19–20.
- Bevir, Mark. 2013. *A theory of governance*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Berggruen, Nicolas, and Nathan Gardels. 2012. *Intelligent governance for the 21st century: A middle way between west and east*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Burrow, Sharan, Mike Callaghan, Tim Costello, Robert Milliner, Holly Ransom, Heather Smith. 2014. G20 2014: Perspectives from business, civil society, labour, think tanks and youth. *G20 Monitor* G20 Studies Centre, Lowy Institute for International Policy, March 2014.
- C20. 2014. C20 Website. <http://www.c20.org.au/>
- Callaghan, Mike. 2013. *Relaunching the G20*. Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.
- Carin, Barry, and David Shorr. 2013. *The G20 as a lever for progress*. Policy Analysis Brief. Muscatine: The Stanley Foundation.
- Cooper, Andrew. 2010. The G20 as an improvised crisis committee and/or a contested 'Steering Committee' for the world. *International Affairs* 86(3):741–57.
- . 2012. *The group of twenty: input and output legitimacy, reforms, and agenda*. ADBI Working Paper 372, 1–28. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute.
- . 2013. Civil society relationships with the G20: An extension of the G8 template or distinctive pattern of engagement? *Global Society* 27(2):179–200.
- Cooper, Andrew, and Colin Bradford. 2010. *The G20 and the post-crisis economic order*. Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation.
- Cooper, Andrew, and Vincent Pouliot. 2015. How much is global governance changing? The G20 as international practice. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50(3):334–350.
- Cooper, Andrew, and Ramesh Thakur. 2013. *The Group of Twenty (G20)*. New York: Routledge.
- Drezner, Daniel. 2014. the system worked: Global economic governance during the great recession. *World Politics* 66 (January): 123–64.
- Dryzek, John. 2011. Global democratization: Soup, society, or system? *Ethics & International Affairs* 25(2):211–34.
- Eccleston, Richard, Aynsley Kellow, and Peter Carroll. 2013. G20 endorsement in post crisis global governance: More than a toothless talking shop? *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17(2):298–317.
- Dobson, H. 2007. *The Group of 7/8*. New York: Routledge.
- G20 History Study Group. 2007. *The Group of Twenty: A History*. <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/docs/g20history.pdf> (accessed October 2, 2014).

- G20. 2011. Cannes Summit Final Declaration. <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2011/2011-cannes-declaration-111104-en.html> (accessed June 2, 2015).
- G20. 2013. Outreach Strategy of the Russian G20 Presidency. http://www.g20.org/docs/g20_russia/outreach_strategy.html (accessed October 2, 2014).
- Gill, Stephen. 1991. *American hegemony and the trilateral commission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hale, Thomas, and David Held. 2012. Gridlock and innovation in global governance: The partial transnational solution. *Global Policy* 3(2):169–81.
- . 2011. *Handbook of transnational governance innovation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Keck, Margaret, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Kharas, Homi, and Domenico Lombardi. (August 2012). *The Group of Twenty: Origins, prospects and challenges for global governance*. The Brookings Institution, Global Economy and Development.
- Pigman, Geoffrey, and John Kotsopoulos. 2007. 'Do this one for me, George': Blair, Brown, Bono, Bush and the 'Actor-ness' of the G8. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 2(2):127–45.
- Price-Thomas, Steve. 2014. Civil Society Organizations and the G20 Global Summitry Project. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtQIOJqKVz8&index=5&list=PLTUUW3689HzCUfoyzR-6gLa8OpZK5oCJh>.
- Harris Rimmer, Susan. 2014. *The G20 and its outreach: New measures of accountability, legitimacy and success*. G20 Monitor G20 Studies Centre, Lowy Institute for International Policy.
- Rudd, Kevin. 2011. The centrality of the G20 to Australian Foreign Policy. The University of Queensland Annual Lecture in Politics and International Affairs, Brisbane, 30 September.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie. 2004. *A new world order: Government networks and the disaggregated state*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Stone, Diane. 2008. Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities and their Networks. *Policy Studies Journal* 36(10):19–38.