

G-Group Legitimacy Research and Reform: the Example of G7 and G20

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Abstract: The continuous development of emerging economies represented by China and Russia has exacerbated the changes in the world political and economic landscape, and international organizations represented by the United Nations have led to inefficient dispute resolution mechanisms in international affairs due to their formalism and pluralism. On the contrary, G-groups has shown its flexibility and efficiency in global governance. However, the international community has been questioned G-group's legitimacy for many years. This paper will take the G7 and G20 as examples, analyze the legitimacy problems in G-groups, explain their reform measures, and propose future reform directions to promote the development of G-groups, so as to help the international community to conduct global governance more effectively.

Keywords: G-groups; Legitimacy; Effectiveness; Global Governance

Introduction

With the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the intensification of the geopolitical crisis, the Western powers led by the United States putting great power competition at the forefront of their foreign strategies, the development of emerging economies led by China, Russia, India and other countries, and the development of the trend of counter-globalization, the international order will then undergo great changes, and global security governance will move from cooperation to disagreement. Now, G-groups and non-official government organizations play an important role in global security governance. As non-official international institutions, the legitimacy of the G7 and G20 mechanisms and their effectiveness have been questioned by the international community as being inadequate. In fact, the problem of insufficient legitimacy is normal for G-groups, and the international community has never been able to propose a solution to this problem. Faced with such a complex situation of the international community today, global governance urgently needs efficient and solid international organizations to deal with long-term international crises. This paper is divided into three parts, the first part mainly explains the characteristics of the G-groups and their roles, the second part takes the G7 and G20 as examples to explain their legitimacy shortcomings and reform measures, and the third part proposes solutions to the legitimacy shortage problem.

1. Characteristics of G-groups

G-groups have their own characteristics. First, G-groups generally do not have a permanent structure, and are mainly organized in the form of regular meetings among countries to discuss issues of common concern and eventually agree on them.^[5] Such as G7 and G20, they are created in response to the financial crisis. Because G-groups do not have legal effect, they cannot directly implement their governance mechanisms through the international community. However, in general, the same issue will usually cause several international organizations to discuss together, and G-groups can cooperate with other international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. Since the member countries of G-groups such as G7 and G20 have a large share of intergovernmental international organizations, the spirit of G20 agreements can be effectively transmitted to the cooperating international organizations when decisions are made.^[12] This model has improved the efficiency of

decision-making within international organizations. Secondly, the topic areas discussed by G-groups are expanding, from the earliest financial field to climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, anti-terrorism and other fields, and G-groups are integrating more deeply into the international community. Again, as an informal international mechanism, G-groups do not have official legal documents and permanent official bodies such as councils and secretariats, so the agreements and statements reached in meetings do not have legal effect, but only serve to express their positions and guide them. Thirdly, the structure of the G-groups mechanism is flexible. The G-groups can easily attract emerging economies to participate in the discussion, which is best reflected by the birth of G20. 2008 financial crisis broke out and the global financial system collapsed, the strength of emerging economies continued to grow, the developed countries represented by G7 members and the traditional financial mechanism could hardly cope with the crisis. Therefore, G7 decided to upgrade the original G20 ministerial meeting to a G20 summit, forming a systemically important G20 with synergistic cooperation between developed and developing countries.

2. Legitimacy drawbacks of G7 and G20 mechanisms

Legitimacy is the key to international organizations.^[1] So far, many scholars have made different explanations for the concept of legitimacy. Keoghan points out that legitimacy refers to whether a global governance institution is perceived as having the right to govern, i.e., the right to govern, and other scholars argue that legitimacy refers to the normative qualities that the international community perceives global governance institutions as having to provide legitimacy for them. In global governance, whether an international organization has legitimacy or not largely determines its international influence and governance effectiveness. Legitimacy of international organizations means that the relevant rules formulated by them have legal effect and should be implemented by the international community in accordance with the regulations. The G7 and G20, as informal international organizations, have long been questioned by the international community about legitimacy.

In recent years, scholars have analyzed the legitimacy of the G7 and G20 from different perspectives, and Jasper Blom, by analyzing the financial and economic indicators of the G7 and G20 members, confirmed their dominant share in the global economy and their ability to organize technical forums. Moreover, in terms of real economic indicators of GDP and trade, the emerging market members of the G20 even overcompensated for the G7 recession. The study shows that the shift from the G7 to the G20 is largely driven by real economic variables and that legitimate membership is largely based on their role as coordinators of emerging powers. Therefore, in terms of the different roles of global governance institutions, legitimate membership should be specifically analyzed according to its diverse and dynamic characteristics.^[2] Marina Larionova and Andrey Shelepov argue that delivering on the commitments of the G8, G20, and BRICS countries is crucial for strengthening the legitimacy of these institutions. The study found that the legitimacy scores of the G20 and BRICS countries are on the rise, but they are not as good as the G8 in meeting their commitments. The G20 has the highest legitimacy of the three institutions due to its large economic potential and representation. Considering economic and demographic projections, the G20 is likely to maintain its leading role in future global economic governance. As the G8's share of the global economy and world population has declined, the institution has become less effective in implementing decisions to address key global governance issues.^[3]

3. Measures to reform the legitimacy mechanism of G-groups

In order to promote G-groups to adapt to the transformation of international socio-political and economic rights, to promote their transformation to long-term governance mechanisms, and to secure their status in the international community, relevant measures should be formulated to improve the legitimacy and their effectiveness.

3.1 Increase the number of emerging economies

For G-groups, their member countries should be widely representative and legitimate and recognized by the international community. Emerging powers are gaining status in international politics and economy and exerting positive influence. Therefore, emerging powers have sufficient advantages and conditions to join G7, G20 and other group organizations, which is conducive to expanding the representation of organization member countries and improving the efficiency and legitimacy of organization decision-making. First, emerging powers are very active in global governance. In order to promote economic development and safeguard their own interests, emerging economies generally adopt a win-win foreign policy of cooperation and participate in global

economic cooperation in a positive manner and in a steady and orderly manner. Therefore, when emerging powers participate in the discussion of international organizations' issues, they will take a positive attitude to deal with international crises and improve the efficiency of making decisions. Secondly, the emerging powers have huge economic development potential. Taking BRICS countries as an example, member countries China, Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa have increased their international influence in recent years and have greater advantages in terms of population, energy, economic and trade, etc., and their international political and economic status will be enhanced in the future.^[7]

3.2 Strengthening coordination and accountability mechanisms

As informal forums that provide decision-making platforms, the G7 and G20 do not have independent organizational structures or formal decision-making systems, and their decision-making documents are not as internationally legally binding as those of intergovernmental international organizations. At the same time, as the G7, G20, BRICS and other organizations have been extending their issue areas in recent years. However, member countries have different national policies and foreign strategies, and they analyze their national strengths and implement the negotiated decisions differently according to the domestic and international environment, which cannot fully guarantee the implementation strength of the decisions. Therefore, G-groups should strengthen coordination and accountability mechanisms to ensure the full implementation of decisions by member countries so as to effectively resolve international crises and improve the legitimacy of institutional membership and the effectiveness of organizational mechanisms. organizations such as the G7 and G20 need to fully improve mechanisms to internally monitor and evaluate whether member countries are complying with their commitments to implement relevant policies by holding ministerial or other meetings, and externally strengthen their relations with non-member countries. Contact, for specific areas, invite non-member countries to participate, and hold summits in the form of G20+N and G7+N, so as to monitor the legitimacy and effectiveness of member countries.

3.3 Avoiding the generalization of governance issues

In order to solve the global financial crisis and accelerate the pace of global governance, the international community established the G7 and the G20 on its own initiative. With the successful resolution of the financial crisis and the expansion of the international crisis from traditional security to non-traditional security, the established international organizations no longer focus on the original governance areas, but begin to participate in the full range of global governance. This situation has led to the low efficiency of dispute resolution in international organizations, the common phenomenon of multiple international organizations participating in the management of the same issue, and the difficulty of governance issues beyond the scope of the governance capacity of member countries, especially for G-groups such as G7 and G20, which do not have legal effect and have certain difficulties in implementation, and the legitimacy of their member countries is easily questioned. Therefore, G-groups should avoid overly broad governance issues, and carry out effective governance in areas where they are good at and have the ability to govern, which is not only conducive to efficient resolution of international disputes, but also enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of G-groups.

4. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the structural characteristics of group-based organizations and explained their unique role in global governance. However, as the research field of group-based organizations continues to be extended and the G20 gradually transforms from an ad hoc crisis resolution mechanism to a long-term governance mechanism, the issue of legitimacy of membership in such organizations gradually comes to the fore. For the G7 and G20, whether the legitimacy issue can be resolved is the key to whether these two organizations can continue to play an effective role in global governance. G-groups should actively take measures to enhance their own legitimacy, starting from internal mechanisms, G-groups should strengthen their coordination and accountability mechanisms, and conduct internal assessments of the results of their commitments to fulfill. They should avoid blindly expanding the scope of governance issues and return to their own areas of good governance.

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