

**Global Governance’ or ‘Global Clubbing’:  
Can an exclusive club deliver benefits for all nations?<sup>1</sup>**

DRAFT VERSION

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A hallmark of multilateralism is the formation of groups in an increasingly globalized world. The formation of various groups in today’s world signals the growth of consciousness towards the significance of close cooperation between nations. One major force that has driven the people to cooperate closely with each other is globalization. Globalization has evidently brought about both good and bad impacts on most aspects of human life.<sup>2</sup> Transfers of knowledge and technology are among the many benefits that all nations can enjoy through globalization. Similarly, the opportunity to travel and work outside their countries is now open for every one regardless of their race, ethnicity and country of origin. Globalization has increased efficiency, welfare, democracy, community and peace (Scholte, 2000: 25). Yet the globalized world also introduced very complex challenges and threats including the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases; weapons of mass destruction; global financial markets and the increasingly globalized economy; the internet; the persistence of poverty; climate change; and ethnic conflicts (Karns and Mingst, 2004: 3). Globalization thus undermines security, equity and democracy, and may lead to the emergence of global pillage, apartheid and debt traps in every corner of the world (Scholte, 2000: 25).

In a globalized world, none can survive the impact of globalization and interdependence unless they work together. The globally well-known *adagio* is that global problems definitely need global solutions. A ‘global solution’ is only possible if the people throughout all continents are committed to cooperate with each other. The necessity of curbing terrorism, blocking the international flow of disease, crime, and drugs, reducing barriers to trade, ensuring environmental protection, promoting human rights and other issues of global awareness has indeed increased the need for global governance (Karns and Mingst, 2004: 21). The urgency of such necessity profoundly reshapes the ways and means of problem solving.

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description of the effects of globalization, see Scholte (2000).

## **The ‘club’ as the most plausible alternative for initiating global governance?**

One key question is whether all nations should sit down together to discuss solutions for surviving the huge impact of global crises. Or, rather, should they let a small number of nation-states formulate the best strategies for them? Ideally all nations, or at least all nation-states – the institutions to which every nation affiliates – should participate in multilateral discussions. The strength of this approach derives from legitimacy (it has support from most nations). Yet this approach also has many weaknesses. Among others, there are concerns about effectiveness (to address the real problems correctly and quickly). Greater numbers of players means greater variety of interests, diverse rules, and issues. These will make the process of negotiation between players complicated, particularly in finding common ground and reaching agreements on collective action, norms or rules.

Another realistic approach holds that a small number of states (a grouping or club) may resolve the issue of effectiveness. It is possible that a small group can manage the complex differences that each member has. Decision-making processes may become more expedient (requiring less time). As Kirton (2008: 10) argues, the small number of states in the club “reduces the transaction costs in coming together to deliberate”. Even the influence of the countries with *de facto* power cannot stop consensus and commitment. The club facilitates fast, flexible agreements suitable to the needs of the time. Every member can monitor the implementation of the consensus and commitment by each member.

It is understandable that the exclusiveness approach is criticized for lacking legitimacy. Which countries should participate in the group? How should the countries be selected? Should the decisions apply to others excluded from the group? How can the countries excluded from the group comply with decisions made within the group? It is useful to examine these questions in relation to the most powerful ‘club’ in the world... the G20.

The pros and cons of the G20 represent the debate on the nature of the exclusive club. The G20 is an informal forum of 20 industrialized and developing economies that follows the basic argument that the search for solutions to global problems should involve a small number of nation-states. The group embraces only 19 nation-states (plus the European Union) out of about two hundreds nation-states in the world, and dozens of regional groupings (similar to the EU). On the G20 website it is clearly stated that “in a forum such as the G20, it is particularly important for the number of countries involved to be restricted and fixed to ensure effectiveness and continuity of its activity.” There is no formal criterion for G-20 membership. The G20 includes countries and regions of systemic significance for the international financial system. As well as their significance, the G20 also considers aspects such as geographical balance and population representation.

Given the global mandate, the G20 should not perform as an ordinary club. Rather, it should concentrate mainly on how to meet the members’ expectation and how to deliver benefits for the club members. As the holder of a global mandate, the G20 should also be responsible for bringing benefit for those excluded from the club membership.

## **G20: high hope, achievement and critique**

The argument behind G20 global responsibility can be further elaborated upon here. While the G20 is often described as a small club, it is bigger than G7 and it constitutes a giant club in terms of the economic power of its members, the represented population, and the ultimate objectives. Together, the 20 members represent around 90 percent of global gross national product, 80 percent of world trade (including EU intra-trade) and two-thirds of the world's population. Having these economic indicators, the G20 confidently claims a high degree of legitimacy and influence over the management of the global economy and financial system. In addition, the G20 also invites the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the president of the World Bank, as well as the chairs of the International Monetary and Financial Committee and Development Committee of the IMF and World Bank to participate in G20 meetings on an *ex-officio* basis. This participation gives further strength to the group of 19 nation-states plus one regional organization.

G20 is a sort of 'exclusive club' established by G8 in 1999 to achieve grand objectives. The greatness of the G20 as a forum of dialogue is that it comprises eight industrialized countries and few developing countries. Its mandate is to contribute to the strengthening of the international financial architecture and to provide opportunities for dialogue on national policies, international cooperation and international financial institutions through which the G20 would help to support growth and development across the globe.<sup>3</sup> The grand mandate of the group obviously demonstrates an ambition of a small club to effectively resolve global problems faced by all nations (although it is equally plausible that members of this club strive to consolidate their own power and control).

When it was established in 1999, the first G20 initiative was to mitigate the financial crisis that hit Asia in 1990s. It is also mandated to contribute to the stability of the international financial system. In its ten year existence, the competence of the G20 has also been tested by another huge financial crisis, that which first hit the United States and then seriously affected the global economy. Yet critics proclaim that the G20 is simply a means to secure the dominance of the industrialized countries.

Indonesia has taken part in this forum together with eight other developing countries: Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, and Turkey.<sup>4</sup> The G20 began its activities in 1999, after being established at a forum organized in Berlin. So far it has organized 12 meetings, two of which were attended by heads of states. The G20 has discussed varieties of key issues related to global economic stability and growth, and made remarkable progress, including agreements about policies for growth, reducing abuse of the financial system, dealing with financial crisis, and combating terrorist financing. The G20 has also placed serious attention upon the adoption of internationally recognized standards in areas such as transparency of fiscal policy, and combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The G20

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<sup>3</sup> See the G20 website.

<sup>4</sup> G20 members include 19 states: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, RRC, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union.

members have addressed the abuses of the financial system and illicit activities, and committed to new higher standards of transparency and exchange of information on tax matters since 2004.

The G20 also began to talk about the necessity of reforming international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and World Bank. The G20 members have intensively worked together to find ways and means to overcome the recent financial crisis (since 2008). The members are deliberating on how to improve regulation, supervision, and the overall functioning of the world's financial markets.

The G20, which covers 90 percent of the world economy, must be central in helping reform the battered world financial system and coming up with a coordinated strategic plan to deal with the current crisis. The foreign minister of Indonesia is clearly optimistic about the work being made by the group. He can be quoted as follows: "we appreciate that if we are to deal with the global problems of the financial crisis, both the developed and emerging economies within the Group of 20, we can work together". Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, also suggested that governments would need to act together to improve financial regulation and stimulate economic growth:

*This financial crisis is moving into an economic crisis, affecting jobs in the real economy, and therefore the need for coordinated or at least cooperative fiscal and monetary policy action across the principal economies of the world has now become necessary.*

Further progress is being made with regards to the reform of financial institutions such as World Bank and the IMF. The two institutions have now entered their 65<sup>th</sup> year, which for most workers marks the time of their retirement (Wibisono, 2009). The two institutions have been seen as untouchable *credit unions* since both were established at the end of WWII. Many nations have benefitted as they represent the interests of big economies that are able to provide biggest 'donation' to the institutions. However, efforts to stabilize the global financial system are only possible if the two are reformed. A recent summit in Washington (in 2008) has signaled the necessity of the reform of the IMF and World Bank as well as the need for a more effective supranational supervisory body to prevent the rise of another global financial crisis.

The United States now has to recognize China as one of the foremost global economic powers. China has been creditor to the American dominated banks for the last 60 years, but has now become the richest banker which has actively invested more than one trillion US dollars in the United States. Together with China, Brazil, India and Russia are considered to be the countries with very good prospects in investment, though their influences in the financial institutions are still less recognized as reflected in the voting system.

### **Indonesia's expectation and contribution**

Indonesian economists are aware that the G8 constitutes a giant economic club through which the initiative of the so-called global political-economic governance has always been deliberated purposively. When the club invited Indonesia to take part in the world's most prestigious club in 1999, Indonesia accepted it with great enthusiasm. Indonesia has been keen to contribute to the

achievement of the dreams of the founding member-states of the G8, particularly since the G20 held a very high profile summit meeting in November 2008.

But why was Indonesia selected to join in the G8-plus? The reason for the invitation to participate at the club can be explained with the popular Indonesian proverb: *ada udang di balik batu* (literally, *there is a shrimp behind the river stone*). This implies that there is a hidden agenda behind the invitation. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world. For most economists, this makes Indonesia an attractive country (great market potential, exploitative potential, and rich in natural resources). Indonesia is also the most powerful economy in Southeast Asia, and has taken a leading role in South-South cooperation and ASEAN activities.

Another question with regards to Indonesian participation in big economic clubs is quite cynical: what contribution Indonesia can make? Will Indonesia be able to contribute to the achievement of the club's collective goals? Vocal critics ask whether Indonesia and other developing countries have grown accustomed to becoming the 'rubber stamp', providing legitimacy for the industrialized countries to reign in the thickening globalization context.

The Indonesian government has apparently been very serious in preparing for their participation in the club. A series of consultations with experts, scholars and business practitioners were held prior to the ministerial meetings as well as the summit meetings. Prior to the G20 summit meeting on 15 November 2008 in Washington, for instance, the Indonesian government prepared a policy paper which proposed a Global Budget Fund scheme. This scheme aims to provide assistance for developing countries to mitigate the impact of international financial crises. Indonesia hoped that countries with surplus revenues such as China, Japan and Australia would put more funding into the global expenditure fund. This scheme is considered important to sustain economic growth in developing countries. However, Indonesian scholars also identified a problem related to which institution would be responsible (becoming 'the umbrella') for the global expenditure fund. There was serious doubt about the credibility of this scheme if the IMF was selected to serve as the institution to pool the funds. Indonesian scholars suggested that there should be one special organ established within the World Bank to oversee the global fund. The special agency should be independent within the middle-term period.

Beside the proposal for a global expenditure fund, Indonesia also proposed reforms to the global financial system. Proposals included the elimination of various conditions that the countries should meet when making loan agreements. Indonesia argued that loan conditionality has hindered the reform and growth process. Indonesia also proposed changes to the voting system to decide on the composition of management and aid commitment. Industrialized countries have long benefitted from conditionality and representation, while decisions have been viewed as unfair for the developing countries. Did the G20 respond positively to these Indonesian proposals? In the London summit, the debates were dominated by the United States, which persistently demanded more money for the stimulus package, and Germany and France, both of which demanded stricter regulation of the financial market.

Theoretically, developing countries may play two possible roles. First, they may join the grouping and thus strengthen the formation of coalitions within the club. Second, they may play a role in brokering and lobbying all coalitions to build consensus. Indonesia preferred to play the role of consensus maker by emphasizing the importance of coordinated action to break through

the impasse due to the sharp differences between industrialized economies. Indonesia proposed a middle way between the reform of the financial system regulation and stimulus package to overcome the financial crisis and to recover market demand, arguing that the stimulus package was important to sort out the short-term problem, while regulation was needed to avoid a similar economic crisis in the long-term. The Indonesian president argued that the G20 should be able to build consensus to mitigate the crisis. For him, the debate was merely a matter of selecting priorities, not a matter of taking global action or coordinated action. Within the next two years, the stimulus package was needed as well as the monetary policy to guarantee economic performance.

The London Summit deliberated three main agendas: (1) coordinated macro-economic actions to revive the global economy, stimulate growth and employment; (2) reform and improve financial sectors and systems in an attempt to continue to deliver progress on the Washington Summit action plan; and (3) reform international financial institutions (the IMF, the Financial Stability Forum, and the World Bank). The G20 summit in London generated a communiqué. Indonesia announced that it is happy to welcome the decision of the G20, arguing that the aid package amounted to 1.1 trillion US dollars. Indonesia sees that, with the additional aid package to the financial institutions together with facilities in financing, the cost would help developing countries deal with the current crisis. Indonesia can get access to the funding for liquidity, trade financing, support balance of payment, and budget expenditures. The facilities of trade financing would help to support the growth of international trade which had suffered since the crisis.

### **Measuring and improving the G20: legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness**

Does a club like the G20 deliver the best solution for the nations which it represents? Does it help all nations affected by the crisis? What policy measures might reduce the economic damage developing countries suffer from the global crisis? Will it be sustainable? How does the G20 constitute shared ownership?

The G20 has geared up its performance progress, particularly within the last few years, since the global financial crisis hit the world's strongest economy (the US). Yet it is obvious that the club needs to immediately address several challenges that hinder the invention of new forms of global governance. As Karns and Mingst (2004) argue, international institutions should be legitimate, accountable, and effective if they wish to be able to generate widely acceptable governance.

#### **1. How to strengthen legitimacy?**

To be accepted as legitimate by the international community, various structures and processes of global governance must accommodate the participation of as many global players as possible, including both state and civil society participants. Hence, legitimacy depends in large part on the diversity and breadth of support for pieces of global governance. Who participates in global governance touches on a fundamental issue of legitimacy. As already discussed earlier, the G20 is an exclusive club whose members remain unchanged since it was established in 1999. It is most likely that the club will not enlarge the number of states (at least within the near future).

Given such exclusiveness, one proposal that can be considered to increase legitimacy is to broaden consultation by member states with the ‘constituencies’ where they may have established affiliations. The endorsement (or at least consultation) of all affected is required to generate global common policies. Indeed, “global policymaking needs to rely on the broadest possible participation on a global scale” (Karns and Mingst, 2004: 515). Widening or globalizing political participation also contributes to “fostering of a genuine sense of global or cosmopolitan justice... [and the] democratic process is the best means for changing conditions of injustice and promoting justice” (Karns and Mingst, 2004: 515). Participation gives people a sense of ownership and a stake in the outcomes of policymaking.

To be considered legitimate, global governance cannot reflect mainly an American, Western, or liberal economic project. Nor can it be considered an activity that the major economic powers can fully control. Participation by developing countries is very important, and the participation will strengthen legitimacy if the developing countries’ influences are recognized in the *de facto* decision-making. Global governance should also address the issue of inequalities of power, wealth, and knowledge in today’s world, and seriously commit to combating the very nature of today’s global conditions. As Karns and Mingst (2004) argue, “these inequalities have profound implications for promoting justice in the international community”. Accountability is a necessary condition for democracy and legitimacy. The competence to enhance the club’s effectiveness will improve the club’s legitimacy.

## 2. How to improve accountability?

While legitimacy is closely linked to the issue of representation and support from the broad international community, accountability needs to reflect equality in decision-making procedures and rules as well as in the implementation of decisions. Accountability must be built into global governance in several ways. The first is by enhancing the transparency of decision making within the club. The club must inform members of activities and decision as well as the grounds on which decisions are taken.

Improving accountability in the international context has been difficult. The dual challenge for making global governance accountable is one of balancing the needs for transparency, openness for equal participation of all members in the process of decision or consensus making process, and responsiveness towards the need for efficacy. The G20 as an exclusive club is not merely responsible for each member state and their all citizens. The G20 should also be accountable to all nations affected by any decision made by the club. Most countries are now obliged to sustain their economic growth in the context of a harsh financial crisis.

As a club, any collective endeavor must satisfy at least one basic condition: a club must provide a large enough pool of net benefits for each of its members (Grynberg, 2005: 5). There are many hanging questions as to whether the G20 has been responsive to the interests of all members as well as open for equal participation by both industrialized and emerging countries. Martinez-Diaz (2007) found that since the G20 was established, it has primarily served as a vehicle for mobilizing support for G7 policies, especially on issues about which the G7 governments cared most strongly. Endorsement by the G20 has given these G7-driven policies a broader base of legitimacy and support. Positions favored by developing countries have made no headway in the group. In Martinez-Diaz’s (2007) findings, during the period 1999–2007, the G20 has done little

to enhance developing country influence. This constitutes an agenda for the future of the G7, that is, how the emerging economies would play a bigger role in the policy making process.

The second question about accountability concerns the responsibility of the G20 to help all nations in mitigating the impact of financial crisis. Various analyses about the causes of the current crisis have been made. One argument about the cause of the crisis was presented by the President of Brazil (Ignacio Lula Da Silva) before the summit in London, saying that the current global financial crisis was caused by “white people with blue eyes who before the crisis appeared to know everything and now demonstrate that they know nothing” (Sanders 2007). The establishment of financial institutions in the US and Europe that have been supported by the international institutions they control – the IMF and World Bank – were the cause of the crisis. The institutions have practiced very poor regulation, and held unremitting trust in the magic of the market.

This constitutes another agenda of the G20, namely how to enhance its efficacy for all nations including those who do not become members of the club. The reform of financial institutions must not only serve to make all nations happy, but there should also be a commitment to make the institutions beneficial for developing countries. To improve accountability, the G20 should address the basic needs of developing countries, and this can only be done by creating opportunities for the developing countries to wield influence in the club.

### 3. How make the club effective?

As Karns and Mingst (2004) argues, the task of assessing effectiveness is one of the central challenges in public policy making, whether at local, national, regional or global levels of politics and governance. Global governance needs to be effective, addressing and sometimes resolving global problems. The club should introduce programs to accomplish global objectives. The club should build bridges between the mechanisms developed and the operations implemented. A specific institution must be able to enforce the agreed-upon behaviors or even to improve compliance.

However, global governance needs not only to be effective in term of its credibility in addressing the core problems of certain global issues. Effectiveness is also closely linked with the extent to which global governance adopts fairness and justice for all population in the world, (no matter whether they are living in developed or developing countries). To be viewed as fair and just, global governance should also be reliable to “reduce inequalities, be responsible to people, protect the innocent, and allow economic and social human needs to be fulfilled, resulting in what has been called a Global New Deal” (Karns and Mingst, 2004). All participants should make endeavor to face the challenges of legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness, with their corollary demands for equality, fairness and justice. The G20 obviously needs to put serious attention to its credibility as the exclusive club with global responsibility.

If being viewed through the lens of ‘club theory,’ the credibility of individual state strategies is considered to be limited, and the club conceptualizes individual state interests and reputations as a ‘good held in common’. Conceptualizing reputation as a good held in common means that

individual state strategies for merely articulating their own national interests and protecting or improving their reputations may be insufficient.

The G20 has been established with a clear intention. The nature of the G20 is the multilateral arena, which means that the members cannot just present their individual positions on an issue and then sit down. As Karns and Mingst (2004: 29) argue, members “must actively engage in efforts to discern the flexibility or rigidity of their respective positions”. They must establish the trust essential to working together:

*Groupings are a way of managing large numbers of participants. States can pool their power and resources to try to obtain a better outcome than they might by going alone [...] Group members must negotiate among themselves to agree on a common position; they must maintain cohesion, prevent defections to rival coalitions, and choose representatives to bargain on their behalf. At some point, crosscutting coalitions need to be formed if agreement is to be reached with other parties. Often, it is a small state of middle powers that can exercise key bridging role (ibid).*

Another means to measure and improve effectiveness is by examining conditions that may encourage states, whether they are members of the club or not, to comply with decisions without coercion. Obeying the decisions is an individual state task which goes to the heart of fundamental characteristic of power, governance and rules. The principles of legitimacy lead actors to obey rules without coercion. Other issues include identifying how people are actually affected by global governance; finding the means to resolve core problems; establishing agreements to maximize these means; determining who does what to translate agreements into action; formulating techniques or mechanisms that work best to achieve the club’s main objectives; and finally, defining who provides incentives or technical assistance to get both member and non-member countries to comply with the club’s decisions.

### **Increasing the role of developing countries in the club**

Another important issue to discuss is how developing countries can exert their influence within the G20 so that the club will consider the interests of developing countries and respond positively. The first question is whether they speak in one voice within the club. The second question is whether they really represent the interests of developing countries as a whole. This issue is indeed very important as the degree of their influence will not be determined by the willingness of the industrialized countries, but by their own competence to make the industrialized countries consider their voice.

Many observers in developing countries suggest that Indonesia, Turkey, and other privileged developing economies should seek emergency liquidity, IMF reforms, greater fiscal support, and more humanitarian development assistance as these interests represent the real needs of the developing countries in facing the impacts of the global financial crisis. The emerging country leaders constitute a slight majority. The major emerging market countries now account for the vast majority of the world's population and up to one-half of world GDP, depending on whether

measured with PPP or market prices. The presence of regional representatives from Asia and Africa gave even the least developed countries some voice at the G20.

Did the emerging economies speak in one concerted voice of common interests? Is the dichotomy between industrialized and emerging economies relevant within the G20? Sanders (2009) suggested the following:

*Sure there were developing countries at the meeting – Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Argentina and South Africa were represented at the table. But, let no one fool themselves that they were looking after the interests of the entire developing world. They were concerned with their own interests and it is doubtful that many of them understand the difficulties and challenges facing small states.*

This critique should be addressed to ‘emerging economies’ that retain privilege to become members of the club. The meaning of representativeness should be clearly defined in participatory term and consultation:

*Of even greater importance, why did the countries of the South – the developing world – not get together before the G20 Summit to devise an agenda of their own? China, India and Brazil will not inspire the confidence of the rest of the developing world unless they take the initiative to gather them together to take their views into account and to advance them in these Summits of select countries. Other developing countries also won't help themselves by not letting Brazil, China, and India et al know that they want their views represented (ibid).*

The participation of a few emerging economies is important. Yet there is a need to deepen and broaden the networking of the emerging economies. The G20 emerging country members should hold consultation with other developing countries excluded from the club prior to the annual meeting of the G20. It can be conducted either through existing mechanisms such as G77 and regional organizations with whom the developing countries associate, or through new formal mechanisms established especially to support the participation of developing countries in the G20. Each mechanism has strengths as well as weakness. It will take a lot of time and resources if developing countries have to establish new mechanisms, but it does not mean that consultation within the existing mechanisms can continue along its present trajectory.

## **Concluding remarks**

No doubt the G20 has modalities to perform its best in helping the formation of global governance, making global governance function well, and stabilizing the world order so that all nation-states can benefit. Given its exclusivity in terms of membership, the club can enjoy greater flexibility and generate common policies faster. There are obviously challenges and agendas to face the challenges effectively. The G8 has been criticized as a club that ‘controls’ global financial institutions for the interests of individual state members of the club. The G20 should not repeat the G8 failure in addressing the needs of developing countries. Strengthening legitimacy, improving accountability, and increasing effectiveness should be measured by the

competence of the club in responding to the basic needs of developing countries rather than merely on the ability to meet the expectations of its own membership.

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