

Global South Perspective on the Threat to Multilateralism in G20 Post-Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

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The G20 is set up to foster cooperation among states while sharing common principles and values. Even though it was first created to handle the global financial crisis, G20 has become a big multilateral forum covering other strategic developmental issues. At the beginning of this year, Russia's invasion of Ukraine came unexpectedly and created commotion among the G20 members. Some members assume it threatens multilateralism in G20 since Russia ignores international law. This paper uses a qualitative approach through a case study, collects the data from a literature review, and looks at different dimensions of multilateralism. Furthermore, the discussion will focus on the perspective of the Global South regarding the multilateralism crisis by overviewing the characteristics of multilateralism in crisis. The result of this paper indicates that the division among the West, Russia, China, and other members showed that the consensus and compliance in G20 no longer exist. It is considered a sign of the deficit of multilateralism where Russia and the West challenged and then pressured the multilateral system. On the other hand, most Global South countries took a different perspective and stance when the West and its allies heavily condemned Russia. While the other countries busily try to expel Russia from G20, the Global South representative countries remain neutral to maintain their relationship with the superpowers. The different perspectives and actions among the G20 members emphasize the crisis of multilateralism that reflects a battle of narratives.

Keywords: *crisis of multilateralism; consensus; Global South; Russo-Ukrainian conflict; G20*

Introduction

The age of multilateralism resulting from the current liberal international order is under pressure. It is a reality—if not a fact—that liberal international order triumphed after the end of the Cold War, right after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc. Therefore, the post-Cold War international order was supposedly founded with at

least three expectations:

1. The establishment of unipolarity in the international system led by the US and its allies
2. The perpetuation of liberal pillars (e.g., open trade regime, liberal wealth, human rights promotion, the proliferation of democratic governance, and the reliance on multilateralism for global problems

co-management)

3. The transformation of world politics from Westphalian international politics to post-Westphalian global politics (McGrew, 2020, p. 31)

The last one consists of two modalities: (1) the intensification of the globalization process brought by the liberal capitalist economic system and technological revolution, especially in communication, and (2) the emergence of a global polity instead of a mere international community—the rise of new non-state actors co-exist and co-work with nation-states (Owens, Baylis, & Smith, 2020, p. 16).

In reality, 21 years after “the wall was torn,” such promises have been turned upside down. We have seen economic crises and turbulences shown by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis, the European debt crisis, the Sino-US trade war, and the COVID-19 recession. There are increasing global security threats coming from geopolitical tensions (e.g., in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Indo-Pacific), non-state “insurgences” (e.g., religious terrorists, cybercriminals), and even bioecological crises (e.g., climate change and the pandemics). The emergence of new great power (China and Russia) and a group of middle powers shifts the international system into multipolarity and brings about norms and values that either openly defy liberal international order or show how the latter ignore Global South’s diverse perspectives (Pinto, 2022; Narlikar, 2022, pp. 66-67). Not to mention the rise of the illiberal populist regime in democratic countries—e.g., the US

under Donald Trump; the post-Brexit UK, Hungary under Viktor Orbán, Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro, Turkey under Erdoğan, India under Narendra Modi, and Indonesia under Widodo; all mentions are the G20 members in one way or another (Zürn, 2021, p. 146; Anugrah, 2020).

G20, one of the latest and most trending global political-economic fora, cannot escape from the current debate on multilateralism’s relevance. On the one hand, G20 is nicknamed “the most significant advance in multilateral policy coordination since the end of the Cold War” (Patrick, 2010). G20 is expected to bring together the Global North (G7+EU+Australia) and the rest of the members from the Global South in addressing major global economic issues such as financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development. Even Indonesia’s G20 presidency in 2022 scrutinizes those themes into global health architecture problems to prepare the international community for future global health crises, digital transformation to bolster post-pandemic economic recovery, and sustainable energy transition to mitigate climate change effects (Government of Indonesia, 2022).

On the other hand, G20 has shown several poor performances in demanding times. G20’s fragmentation between the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the European Debt Crisis led to the inability to consistently produce a set of coherent policies and the promised Mutual Assessment Process (MAP) on fiscal stimulus and restraint, currency valuation, trade and financial protectionism, the Eurozone, and financial reg-

ulation—harmonization versus differentiation (Cooper, *The G20 is Dead as a Crisis or Steering Committee: Long Live the G20 as Hybrid Focal Point*, 2019, p. 511; Monticelli, 2019, pp. 60-61). Regarding macroeconomic policy discussions, the Global North and Global South perspectives of pertinent G20 members are rarely bridged (Monticelli, 2019, pp. 73-74). G20 also failed to lead international cooperation in collectively mitigating COVID-19 during its peak moments (Wolf, 2021). The relevance of the G20 has been and will be tested as G20 finance ministers and central bank leaders must resolve global inflation, credibility, currencies issue, Global South soaring debts, food security, oil price, and trade (Jamrisko & Condon, 2022). Not to mention the antagonism between Global North and Global South within G20 appears during the current G20 Presidency: While there is a thrust from the former to respond to the emergence of the Russia-Ukraine Crisis, the latter remained vague and did nothing specific to maintain their relationship with Russia (Crawford, Marsh, & Sguazzin, 2022). Unsurprisingly, the international community questioned G20's existence, especially during Indonesia's presidency.

A set of literature reviews has been conducted on G20's multilateralism regarding its institutional effectiveness and legitimacy. It is essential because the multilateral nature of G20 is now facing several existential challenges and obstacles in achieving its global economic and financial governance objectives. Tenets on discussions about it include the notion of the G20 as an emergence

of a new form of multilateralism (Wade, 2011; Woods, 2010; Cooper, 2010; 2015), its political legitimacy (Gronau, 2016; Kirton, 2021), limitation (Wihardja & Wijaksana, 2022; Litman, 2017). However, the literature review infers that no primary literature assesses the G20 within the framework of its potential crisis of multilateralism, even after several economic, geopolitical, and pandemic crises. This paper's objective to offer a novelty in analyzing the G20 as a multilateral institution during these trying times, combined with our effort to commemorate the Global South leaderships within the G20 (Indonesia this year and India next year), is justified for this paper to discuss whether G20, as an embodiment of multilateralism, is under crisis and what Global South perspectives have to say about it.

The division within the members of G20 – the West, Russia-China, also Global South – proves how the crisis of multilateralism is indeed correct. The G20 members failed to reach a consensus and stand by their arguments regarding the issue of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. The impact of this issue led to a more significant economic, food, and energy crisis, which enraged the West. The political power competition between the West and Russia-China made other members wary of the situation. Global South decided to take no side and was keen on making the G20 agenda successful.

This paper's structure will begin by introducing two analytical frameworks and their operationalization: multilateralism and its characteristics during a crisis. It will also introduce the research method used in this

study—[...]. Next, this paper will dissect the “anatomy of G20” based on its institutional evolution and functionality. In this stage, this paper will also show how the Global North (G7)-Global South (emerging economies) dichotomy within the G20 membership shapes the current affairs of pertinent multilateralism. After that, the discussion continues how the emergence of the Russia-Ukraine Crisis gets its relevance within the G20 discourse. At this point, this paper will examine whether the crisis characterizes the undermining of G20 multilateralism. Lastly, before concluding this study, this paper will explore and articulate the Global South’s standpoint (s).

Methodology

The Anatomy of Multilateralism

This paper follows John Gerard Ruggie’s conceptualization of multilateralism and sees it as:

“a generic institutional form of modern international [...] that coordinates national policies [and inter-state] relations among three or more states based on certain generalized principles of conduct—that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence” (Ruggie, 1992, pp. 567,571).

From this definition, we can identify three dimensions of multilateralism. The first one is its modality. According to Ruggie (1992, p. 571), multilateralism constitutes two modalities: indivisibility and diffused

reciprocity. Indivisibility is the first and foremost reason for its member to participate in multilateralism. Diffused reciprocity refers to the contingent, long-term mutual gain expected from members of multilateralism. In short, after members find the ultimate reasons to establish multilateralism, they will do what it takes to maintain and sustain it in the longer term.

The second dimension is its actuality. Because Ruggie sees multilateralism as another form of institution, we can expect that multilateralism exists through institutionalization. According to him (1975, pp. 569-570), this process goes through three levels. The most abstract one is the “epistemic community.” Borrowing from Peter Haas (1992, pp. 2-3), an “epistemic community” is understood as a network of stakeholders having similarities in beliefs and specific perspectives/paradigms toward the world/reality (*episteme*). Their encounter in such a manner, added Ruggie (1975, p. 570), will create a collective response that, if furtherly agreed upon, will be translated into “a set of common goals and expectations, rules and regulations, work plans, and financial commitments”—the true meaning of a regime. The last and the most concrete stage of institutionalization is an institution or organization—the “house” of the regime where its planning, implementation, and evaluation occur.

The third and last dimension is functionality. This dimension borrows John James Kirton’s conceptualization of six elements of institutional performance—6 Ds (Kirton, G20 Governance for a Globalized

World, 2013, pp. 56-60). They are domestic political management (of hosting/being members of a multilateralism), deliberation (of spilled-over cooperation/diplomacy), direction setting (of a complex, adaptive system), decision making (in determining multilateral issues), delivery (of commitment and effective implementation of multilateral decision), and development of global governance (in terms of multilateralism's continuity). These elements can be used to assess an institution/multilateralism based on its performance's spatiality and/or temporality (Kirton J. J., 2013, p. 60).

Nevertheless, multilateralism can be under pressure or even crisis. According to Edward Newman (2007, p. 27), there are four circumstances in which a multilateral institution can objectively be in crisis:

1. The constitutive principles upon which the arrangement is founded and operates are consistently challenged by the activities and declarations of its leading members.
2. There is an epistemic consensus that the values and institutions of a particular form of multilateralism are no longer compelling or legitimate and that the multilateral arrangement consistently fails to achieve the principal objectives for which it was created.
3. There is an epistemic consensus that the ineffectiveness and illegitimacy of a particular multilateral form are permanent as long as the constitutive principles of the organization remain the same.
4. Multilateral institutions are challenged by significant alternative arrangements that

perform the same task, to which member states can transfer their diplomatic attention and material resources.

The operationalization of the conceptual framework to "dissect" the "anatomy of G20" will be conducted based on an interpretative case study design (Lijphart, 1971, p. 692). It aims to illustrate and interpret a specific case—post-Russia-Ukraine crisis G20 multilateralism—based on a chosen conceptual or theoretical framework—multilateralism—to illuminate the pertinent subject. The operationalization can be divided into three steps. The first step will focus on the modality and actuality of G20, which explains its evolution and *raison d'être*. The second step will be allocated to its functionality. This part will be divided into two parts.

On the one hand, it will provide the explication of the G20 governance directly applied to the concern of the Russia-Ukraine crisis, especially on whether and how the crisis was brought to the table of the G20 discussion. However, on the other hand, it will also explore Global South countries' roles and standpoints on the pertinent issue/crisis. The latter will be positioned right after the final part of the operationalization, which will examine whether and how the G20 is under crisis as a multilateral institution. All data required in this study, which are dominantly qualitative (non-numerical forms like images or texts), are obtained from academic books and journal articles, press releases, and (online) media news through desk study (Lamont, 2015, pp. 79-91). This research tendency goes to content and discourse analysis, which focuses on explicitly stated in a text or

image and digs into its implicit and “hidden” meanings that should be primarily contextualized (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014, p. 65).

The Evolution of G20

We must discuss G7 to talk about the actuality (i.e., emergence and evolution) of G20 institutions, as the former was born out of the womb of the latter. G7 was established in 1973 as an ad hoc gathering club of finance ministers from major industrialized/developed/capitalist countries, i.e., the US, the UK, France, and Germany. This so-called “Library Group”—named after the US White House Library as the initial place for their informal meetings (Bayne & Putnam, 2000, p. 20)—expanded to seven members after Japan, Italy, and Canada joined; they held their first summit in 1975. It was once G8 after the inclusion of Russian membership in 1997, despite being reversed to G7 after Russian membership was suspended following the 2014 annexation of Crimea. G7 was purposed for its members to share and coordinate their neoliberal macroeconomic policies in response to three economic crises at that time: the end of the Bretton Woods system in 1971, the 1973 Oil Crisis, and the 1973-1975 Recession (Harvey, 2005, p. 33; Bradford & Finn, 2011, p. 1).

Crises in Asia, Russia, and Latin America during the late 1990s raised concerns about the legitimacy of G7/8 in “steering” global economic architecture. It was realized, especially by financial ministers Paul Martin (Canada), Hans Eichel (Germany), and Larry Summers (the US), that G7/8 could not do it alone, and they had to move

on from neoliberal orthodoxy and accommodate other emerging economies’ perspective (Watubun, 2022; Kirton J. J., 2013, p. 47). We can see that the coagulation of what will become the “epistemic community” of the G20 regime started with the evolution of the G7, which was triggered by economic crises. Such an “ideational consensus” on global economic governance was passed down to establish the first G20 Financial Ministers and Central Bank Leaders Meeting in Köln in 1999. Therefore, the new G20 regime becomes a group of major industrialized/developed economies from the Global North and emerging ones from the Global South. As a consequence, the G20 discussion expands from mere global financial-monetary stability (in terms of crisis management/mitigation) to challenges on globalization, combatting terror financing, development and aid, financial abuse/crime, financial-sector institutional building, demographics, regional economic integration, domestic policies (especially on surveillance), trade, and fiscal policies (Bradford & Finn, 2011, p. 4).

The G20 regime finally got its intact institutional form as a multilateralism after holding its first summit in 2008. Several institutionalization processes include the annualization of summitry and the expansion of ministerial sectors of working groups coordinating with the sherpa—e.g., finance, central bank, health, agriculture, labor, trade and industry, energy, foreign affairs, digital transformation, education, tourism, environment—and engagement groups—i.e., B20, C20, L20, S20, T20, U20, W20, Y20 (ISPI, 2016; SHERPA G20 Indonesia, 2022; Ha-

jnal, 2019, pp. 37-54). The scope of discussion also expands to anti-corruption, mutual assessment process (MAP), financial inclusion, investment and infrastructure, labor market and employment, agriculture and food security, global value chain, MSMEs, corporate governance, banking, human resources, gender and development, energy, digital transformation, health system, sustainable development, and climate change (SHERPA G20 Indonesia, 2022).

Turning to its modality, G20 also reflects its indivisibility and reciprocity. Undeniably, the G20 identity is built based on the fact that they are the largest economies today. 16 out of 19 member states (excluding the European Union/EU) are among the top 20 largest economies in the world (IMF, 2021). Their economic size represents 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade, and 2/3 of the world's population (OECD, 2022). Aside from the fact that institutional development of G20 (and even G7) has always been triggered every time the world economy is under economic crisis, several G20 members from the Global South had, at least once, suffered the pre-G20, 1990s economic crises (e.g., Indonesia, South Korea, China, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Mexico, India)—most of them in terms of government debt crises.

On the one hand, it shapes the G20's existential solidarity to fight any economic crisis in the future through multilateral cooperation and coordination. On the other hand, it confirms the aforementioned "G7 could not do it alone" premise; in terms of global political-economic governance, Global North countries need "collective legitima-

cy and support" from Global South countries to as much as the latter need "benefits spillover" from the former. Therefore, G20's indivisibility comes from its member states sharing existential fear of economic crisis and desire for sustainable development and growth in the face of ever-expanding issues.

Regarding (diffused) reciprocity, because the G20's economic size statistically represents the majority of the world economy, it is safe to say that the politics of global economic governance will be determined based on its ability to satisfy G20's economy and development agenda. Therefore, G20 member states are interested in setting and implementing any economic and development agenda they will mutually/collectively gain from this multilateralism. To confirm this, the expansion of the G20 agenda each year seeks to explore and exploit sites of mutual/collective gains. Not to mention that being members and even annual hosts of G20 events can increase their political and economic profile and leadership internationally and domestically. In short, this paper must agree with Robert H. Wade's argument (2011, p. 355) that G20's economic weight and broad membership generate a high degree of legitimacy in front of its members to manage the global economy and financial system.

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: How it creates division within G20 Members

The G20 Indonesia's presidency held by Indonesia focuses on the recovery post-pandemic and thus tries to work together to encourage and create a more sustain-

able recovery even though the pandemic continues. Next, we know that the G20 members committed themselves to achieving those goals before Russia's invasion of Ukraine occurred. The notion of this issue was brought first by the many G20 members, particularly the G7 members. They unfavoured the aggression and condemned Russia for its serious action. They even thought of bringing the talk about the economic sanctions to the table and then strongly voiced it out.

On the other hand, the members, such as China and India, abstained from this issue and did not show any reaction. Moreover, Indonesia clearly stated that they want to avoid the issue and solely focus on the current priorities (Alexander, 2022). That shows the divisions among the members of G20.

Following the issue, the G7 members supported removing Russia from the G20 in G7 and NATO meetings (Llewellyn, 2022). The same thing happened in 2014 when Russia first launched its annexation of Crimea. At that time, most of the G7 members, especially the United States, agreed to suspend Russia from the G7. After the suspension, Russia walked out of the meeting in 2017. This year, the same thing happened during the G20 foreign ministers meeting in Bali, Indonesia. On July 7 and 8, the foreign ministers' meeting was held face-to-face for the first time after the invasion. The representatives from China, Russia, and other state members have come together for this high-level meeting. The agenda of this meeting includes the global food and energy crisis, the war in Ukraine, and the crisis of multilateralism. The concrete outcomes

did not proceed well despite the talks and agreements concluded before Russia invaded Ukraine. In the previous G20 summits, the members agreed on approaching food security and conflict issues. However, the agreement fell short after Russia invaded Ukraine, and the Bali meeting did not produce any joint communique.

Despite low expectations, the G7 foreign ministers even boycotted the reception during the Bali meeting. They made it clear that they did not welcome Russia to get back into the business (Sinaga, 2022). The cold reaction from the Western leaders was highly aggressive and caused the Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, to leave. This time, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine had more impact and was possibly prolonged. The attendance of the Russian foreign minister at the meeting was intended as a way to meet other G20 members and break the international isolation of Russia. However, Russia was only left with a cold shoulder from some of the members. Besides Russia's actions in attacking Ukraine, the impact of the conflict is felt worldwide, especially regarding budgets, energy, and food. Europe and many developing countries directly felt the heavy consequences. There was even a talk about the risk of global food shortage and soaring energy prices, thus why many countries in the G20 condemned this issue and called for Russia to end the war.

To explain how the G20 operates and responds to this issue systematically are looking at six dimensions: domestic political management. This dimension generally outlooks the economic gains from prestige,

such as how the increased image while participating as a member of G20 or becoming the chair of the annual meeting could balance the financial and political costs. Since the last G20 summit in Rome in 2021, the mandate of the presidency has been transferred to Indonesia. Indonesia focused on digital transformation, global health architecture, and energy transition. With various activities planned by the Indonesian government, there are some strategic benefits of the G20 presidency. One of them is that the G20 presidency could earn Indonesia credibility and global trust in leading the global recovery efforts since it can initiate cooperation and concrete result for recovery (Lee, 2022). Credibility is fundamental in Indonesia's diplomacy and foreign policy. That explains Indonesia's stance on staying neutral about Russia-Ukraine in the G20 meeting despite the pressure from Western members. Indonesia managed its domestic politics to show the image of a peacemaker and enforce the pragmatic approach in foreign policy. In the recent G20 Foreign Ministers meeting, Indonesia was keen on inviting Russia and Ukraine to show that they listen to Western concerns while avoiding supporting Russia blatantly.

Second, the dimension of deliberation comprehends the internal and private opportunity in the G20 summit that leads to bilateral cooperation. Despite the recent event, China keeps backing Russia in G20 and openly supports it. Chinese officials even lobbied Indonesia to take this issue off the agenda, focusing solely on economic recovery issues instead. However, choosing to only

focus on this year's G20 agenda, Indonesia decided to visit Russia and Ukraine. This visit came with a positive result, after which Putin agreed to provide a security guarantee on food and fertilizer supplies from Russia and Ukraine (Dharmaputra, 2022). The agreement between Indonesia and Russia brought the concerns over the global food crisis lower and ensured the stability of the G20 agenda. Third, the dimension of direction setting is about the G20's ability to foster the complex adaptive system. Due to pressure caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, G20 Sherpa plays a vital role in directing the setting standard and navigating collaborations within the G20 framework. Sherpa also paves the way for G20 leaders to agree on the issue. During the C20 meeting, it was concluded that the current economic, food, and energy crisis directly resulted from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, thus raising awareness about it (Pratama, 2022). The crisis needs immediate measures; otherwise, the global threat and severe economic consequences will alleviate poverty. This direction setting urged the G20 members to prioritize dialogue and consider the humanitarian aspect of the conflict to find solutions.

Fourth, the decision-making dimension refers to the soft applied law that could set a credible joint commitment. The soft law is an excellent moral source for all members of G20 and any related parties. In G20, a joint communique is a soft law representing all members' commitment. However, in this issue, the foreign ministers of the G20 had difficulty achieving consensus on efforts to mitigate the economic, food, and energy

impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict or producing a joint communique. With Russia and China in the room and the US insisted on holding Russia accountable, other members were wary and could not push the decision. Fifth is the delivery dimension, which covers the actions executed by G20, from the commitment delivery to the implementation of practical solutions. This mechanism sustains in the summit even though the presidency changes every year. Committing to the group and building conformity is the basic principle (Kirton, Warren, & Rapson, 2021). The G20 members generally comply with the summit commitment since it has a high compliance rate. Information sharing and policy coordination are the characteristics of collective actions by the members. Today, the commitment and compliance of the members are questionable. The last dimension is the development of global governance. It covers the development of G20 as an internationally recognized group and its ability to keep this identity and develop as a global network hub. G20 has evolved into a multilateral framework for the past 23 years, but the aggravation of the deficit in multilateralism is showing in this critical time. Russia's aggression exacerbated the global food and energy crisis and raised the power politics within the group. It looks like G20 face obstacles to developing further as G7 unites and gains traction with their values of open societies (Sobel, 2022)

The G20 is a crucial institution that includes the G7 and emerging economic countries for addressing global governance challenges. The critical actors in G20 can get

involved in every aspect of the forum processes or advance further in the subsequent summits. The original intention is to use the G20 processes to advance the global agenda, promote multilateralism, interact professionally, and address global issues. The priorities and concerns over global issues, including international finance, climate change, and the so-called Coronavirus, are what this forum is for, not geopolitics rivalries. The friction of the Russia-Ukraine issue is best to be left aside from the G20 discussion, even though that is not true.

Crisis of Multilateralism

Effective and fair multilateral mechanisms are fundamental in G20. The G20 plays a much-needed and crucial role in implementing the agenda and strengthening multilateralism. Inefficiencies and contradictory actions among the members have let the group down (Narlikar, 2022). This multilateral group is seen to be overambitious over its unrealistic goals despite the difficulties in reaching a consensus.

Firstly, the G20 principles are constantly challenged by global challenges, such as COVID-19, the food and energy crisis, and also the biggest one, Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, China's unending support of Russia and its illiberal influence in international organizations put G20 under profound structural shifts. These global challenges certainly endangered the multilateral arrangement in the G20. As an example of a multilateral forum, G20 relies on trust and commitment within the framework of international cooperation to recover and manage

the risks through joint solutions and solid and effective institutions, yet is afraid of losing their impact (Le Drian & Maas, 2019). The G20 is what Richard Haass called *a la carte* multilateralism, where different multilateral forums and organizations are merely instrumental spaces for superpowers (Haass, 2008). Russia's invasion of Ukraine proves how the G20 is a group that empowers big powers. This declining multilateral arrangement could be ugly and damage the trust forged among states for good.

Secondly, the values of G20 are no longer effective in achieving the principle's objectives since the constant global challenges hit in the last two years. Recently, multilateralism seems to be declining since the backlash over the predominance of the Global North and the rising of populism have eroded the liberal values in the multilateral system (Geneva Graduate Institute, 2020). The notion is supported by what happened during the last G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bali, Indonesia. The G20 members failed to reach a consensus on Russia and Ukraine issues, which ended up without any joint communique following the Global North boycott and Russia's walkout from the meeting. The increased transnational problems and the emergence of Russia and China as other international power centers made consensus more complicated in G20. A deadlock in this multilateral structure shows how it becomes the platform for geopolitical contests with the risk of challenges that G20 tried to tackle (L, Fattibene, Hackenesch, Sidiropoulos, & Venturi, 2020). The declining competency of G20 also brought concern about its account-

ability and transparency. The decisions are taken behind the table because it is an informal forum without a formal multilateral arrangement. Even though G20 has succeeded in keeping and protecting the market, it is a tool for the Global North to secure access to emerging markets (Tedesco & Youngs, 2009). In a way, many are pondering whether G20 is an ultimate effective multilateral forum or the opposite.

Thirdly, the constitutive principles of G20 remain the same to prove its ineffectiveness and illegitimacy. The importance of G20 has grown significantly, especially in the crisis management of the global economy. It receives much attention, and the G20 development is considered the rise of the Global South or emerging economic countries. As the forum reflects, the role of the West or other major developed economies has diminished. The growing importance of Brazil, China, and India in the global economy and the G20 forum demonstrates the shifting international order to a multilateral one (Moreland, 2019). Even though the G20 has been recognized globally due to its importance, the G20 process has yet to be established by any multilateral treaty. This then sparks concerns about how the formal multilateral arrangements have declined. The G20 serves as an instrument to make global governance more legitimate and a platform to reach a consensus among the players. However, it is essential to note that multilateralism is not equal to global governance but defined as a particular organizing principle of global governance. It is often understood as the essential management of any transnational issues

by multiple parties, which operate based on mutually agreed and shared principles of conduct (Ruggie, *Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution*, 1992). Nevertheless, these mutually agreed principles have eroded and divided the members of G20 into different sides.

Fourthly, the G20 is challenged by BRICS as both are committed forums to reform the global governance architecture. As a group of emerging economies, BRICS has advanced to global governance and has grown its collective discourse power. Some BRICS members are also part of G20, and the other four members of BRICS did not follow the Global North to impose economic sanctions on Russia, which indicates the basis of consensus and common interests in the group. Looking deeply into the BRICS principle's values, it is much more consistent than G20. The interests, rules, and values among BRICS countries represented their direction in approaching the international order that is cooperative, peaceful, and developing (Huang, 2022). Furthermore, the Global North plans to build a new exclusive multilateral arrangement to surpass the G20. The Global North has intended to reshape a Western-led world order and exclude BRICS and the Global South (Pinto, *The failures of multilateralism*, 2022).

In the end, recent events from Russia demonstrated that multilateralism is indeed in crisis, specifically in the G20. Not only caused by the latest challenge, but the erosion of multilateralism was shown through the dominance of one party, which proves how the principles do not work anymore. It

goes stagnant and thus gets threatened by the grown existence of BRICS. The Global North is no longer shaping the global norms and has control over it. At the same time, China and Russia have joined hands and expanded their influence while defying the international liberal order principles. Meanwhile, the Global South put a neutral position on this matter and got entangled between these superpowers. The crisis of multilateralism shows how it still cannot replace sovereign states, yet cooperation is beneficial.

The Global South Standpoint on The Issue

Regarding the issue of war in Ukraine, many G20 members thought about how to deal with Russia. Most Western members strongly condemned Russia and supported severe economic sanctions in the hope of Russia ending the war. On the other side, the rest of the members abstained from the situation. Many emerging economies and developing countries were not prepared to suspend Russia. Even now, Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Turkey would not support the exclusion of Russia from the summit (Alexander, 2022).

Western countries pressed Russia over the issue of military assault and accused Moscow as the leading cause of the global wave of crisis post-invasion of Ukraine (Ricard, 2022). The shock in the global economy was allegedly the direct effect of the invasion and attack committed by Russia. The crisis worsens, especially after the significant setback of COVID-19, which hit the world over the past two and a half years. Russia's attack against Ukraine slowed the global recovery,

most notably in the economic sector. That becomes a solid reason why many members strongly opposed Russia and decided to put an economic sanction on it.

As the chair of this year's presidency, Indonesia focuses more on the importance of the forum to avoid the boycott. The narrative relied on the matter of recovery, which did not only involve the slow-down process but also how the interests of middle and lower-income countries could become very costly if the agenda of G20 is not going through as planned. Plans to establish a more vital global collective leadership, ensure inclusive and sustainable growth, and maintain stability and security are what the G20 seeks (Jokeila, 2011). Furthermore, the boycott pressure reminded Indonesia of the domestic struggles in ASEAN, where it failed to convince Myanmar to end the conflict through similar measures. In this case, the Indonesian government fears a similar approach to Russia would become a boomerang for the G20 members.

Therefore, most emerging and developing economies have become a part of the Global South. Over the past two decades, the global economic transformation impacted the economic growth in developing countries. China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and South Africa become the economic center and pillar of the Global South. This remarkable achievement boosted the cooperation between developing countries, including their roles in the G20. While the Western standpoint and narrative about condemning Russia were primarily agreed upon, the global diversity created the Global South. The

Global South acknowledged some countries' increased vulnerability and the consequences they had to bear from the prolonged impact of colonialism (Bailey & Nanton, 2022). Analyzing the Global South perspective on the war between Russia and Ukraine demonstrates some more considerable factors related to their responses in G20.

As the most influential actor in the forum, China did not join the boycott and chose not to condemn Russia (Llewellyn, 2022). On the opposite, China instead condemned the Western sanctions on Russia. The close ties developed between China and Russia have a long history. Nonetheless, the Global South in G20 – Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey – the decision to not take sides shows a more complex picture of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Most of these countries abstained during the General Assembly vote back in April (Sidiropoulos, 2022). The abstentions showed how non-alignment became reinvigorated. It was not simply about neutrality but putting forward the agenda of developing countries caught between the superpowers. The Global South members in G20 clearly emphasize the importance of solidarity and its non-aligned position in pursuit of mediation between Russia and Ukraine.



Source: (Adler, 2022)

The standpoint of the Global South towards Russia could be overviewed through two elements: the fundamental foreign policy principles and the solidarity. From the critical foreign policy principles, we understand that most Global South members resisted embroiling in significant power conflicts. They do not consider the current situation solely a war between Russia and Ukraine but a proxy war between Russia and NATO. Regarding the issue, Global South reignited the non-alignment movement principles to seek their independent views and promote peaceful resolution through dialogue, mediation, and negotiation. Peaceful resolution of disputes has been a core principle to many of Global South, even though in the case of Russia-Ukraine, it was challenging to push for a negotiated settlement (Guyer, 2022). Other foreign policy principles are about a fair and consistent multilateral system and general opposition to imposing unilateral sanctions by the West. The Global South believes that the UN, as the apex of the global governance system, should be overhauled for its inability to respond effectively to the crisis in Ukraine. Moreover, the imposition

of sanctions by the West on Russia was seen as a double standard in handling different conflicts. Many of Global South showed skepticism about how West members handled the issue.

The main feature of Global South's foreign policy is solidarity with struggling countries. Like it used to be during the Cold War, it was hard for the Global South members to choose a side, especially when some countries looked fondly at Russia, even though its interests were often overlooked. Due to this solidarity, China pursued a contrary and complicated way but still sought cooperation. Meanwhile, Indonesia acted in the middle as a fence-sitter, yet Saudi Arabia hedged the bet to the extreme, and India carefully observed and navigated the situation. Solidarity might be one of the reasons, but it would also be because the Global South chose to avoid the side to secure the position in case Russia wins over Ukraine.

Aside from the two elements, the reasons related to economics and trade and broad skepticism towards the West become more relevant. Russia is the primary producer and exporter of energy (gas and oil), food, fertilizer, and many more (Guyer, 2022). Due to economic reasons, the Global South hesitated and could not afford to cut its ties with Russia. The current food and energy crisis also directly impacted the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Going against Russia would not do the Global South good, adding to their skepticism towards the West. In the end, the resistance to taking sides does not entirely mean that the Global South will sit out the conflict. They wanted to mediate to help Ukraine

while maintaining a neutral stance towards Russia.

The point of view of the Global South relied on solidarity and the idea of peace. However, the differences between G7 and Global South inside G20 on how they see and respond to the issue of Russia-Ukraine, clearly illustrate the rupture among members. The principles of multilateralism are being neglected, in which some Global South countries tend to navigate themselves by being neutral.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the multilateral nature of G20 is on the verge of falling apart due to what happened in Ukraine. This matter urges the members to deal with Russia, even though the root of this crisis is beyond the event. Responding to the issue, the Global South narrative focused more on the West's hypocrisy instead. Many Global South countries exercised their rights for a non-aligned foreign policy and would not take any side, especially in a conflict in which they have no direct interest. The stance of Global South is not necessarily because they condoned Russia's action. This proxy becomes the example of West's failure to deliver the rules expected to be followed by others. However, the Global South countries no longer wanted to be pushed by great powers. It means that the West would not take any support from emerging and developing countries for granted. Thus, the Global South looked at this matter to determine their actions. The division within the G20 members becomes the constellation of interests driven by big powers.

It leads to a crisis of multilateralism among the G20 members even though strengthening multilateralism is necessary since it is the only way to deal with other issues, such as the food and energy crisis, climate change, and increased poverty. The complex issues require multilateralism for it to be effective and inclusive. Otherwise, if the crisis of multilateralism in G20 continues, the path to a sustainable peace and prosperous world will be difficult.

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