

Sample on 3000 Word Essay (G8 AND G20)

In the last decade, it became clear that the world needs fundamental changes in the field of global governance. This provokes the review of the role of G8 in the context of the G20 increasing role in the international economy and politics and the determination of the G20 position in the international relations. With the rising dominance of the principle of multilateralism in the sphere of international cooperation, the special attention is being paid to the determination of actual legitimacy of these organizations. Although this notion is actively researched and discussed, as there is a number of different approaches on this topic, the efficiency of these forums is of special interest. This category refers more to empirical, than theoretical dimension and though it still can be doubted and criticized for the character of impact on the international arena. The two problems – effectiveness and legitimacy – will be discussed in this paper, as it is extremely important to, research and analyze study this aspect of international relations in order to be able to elaborate new approaches within the sphere. It is obvious that the multilateralism approach was replaced by the multilateralist one, which appears to be more effective within the contemporary global politics; this determines the great importance of the G8 and G20 forums (Kalher 1992). These two examples of effective international cooperation now play one of the leading roles in the field of decision-making on the world arena and, therefore, they have to be studied and analyzed in terms of their character, nature and possible future perspectives.

Multilateralism is a kind of cooperation that appeared as an alternative to multilateralism. Multilateralism, although being used in the past, was first officially defined only after 1945 by the United States. This kind of cooperation implicates the comparatively open membership with no high barriers to participation and is based on principles of fair conduct. This determined the usefulness of the multilateralism in the international life after the Second World War, as the equality and fairness were essentially important for the international society at that time. This type of organization was easier to spread, and it supported the principles of high value of stable long term international cooperation (Carrin, Smith, Heinbecker, Thakur 2013). But as the time passed, the great powers used to resist the multilateralism, and, in

the last decades, it faced a lot of criticism for its ineffectiveness and weakness. This logically led to the rising of minilateralism.

In contrast, minilateralism represents a more closed, selective type of cooperation that involves only the world leading countries and is of a more secretive character. No doubt, this cooperation is not highly evaluated by the countries out of it. But, despite this fact, the system has real impact on the world policy and economy that is especially important in the period of economic, political, military and social crises. The best example of the minilateralism in action is the G8 and G20. The minilateralism can be considered as more realistic approach. The minilateralism concentrates on the role of power and aims to reach the maximum effect with minimum efforts. The great powers are considered as the leaders of the world political and economic process and, therefore, if they are collected together, it is easier for them to elaborate the decision that will have the real impact on the world arena. This does not mean that the rest of the countries have no real impact on the situation, but the fact is that the amount of their influence can't be compared with the influence of the leading countries. This results in the fact that the stronger can act and the weaker faces the consequence.

Continuing the theoretical dimension within the research, it is important to define the category of legitimacy, as the one of the core questions within the studies of the contemporary role of G8 and G20 is whether these institutions are legitimate. The term legitimacy can be regarded from both normative and sociological scale. The normative meaning of the notion is more practical, as it refers to organization's real right to rule. This means that the institution has to follow particular set of its rules and control the credibility of these rules and evaluating the advantages of their functioning (Johnson, 2009). The sociological evaluation of the legitimacy is focused on the belief whether the particular institution has this right to rule, so that the approach depends on the society in which the institution exists and functions. From this point of view, we may fairly state that the analyzed institutions are legitimate, but it is more interesting to evaluate their legitimacy in the normative nature. Here we can refer to the notion that the global governance institution can be considered as legitimate in the situation where it has particular merits that lead to the constant critical evaluation of the institutions' ability to reach its targets within the existing environment with the help of interrelating with the other institutions and agents inside and outside the institution. The important characteristic of such organizations is that they

include a wide range of different unities and entities, and they have a number of characteristics similar the governmental ones. They set particular rules and they publicly adhere themselves to the consequences of their actions, both positive and negative, that influence not only the organization itself, but the society around (Keohane and Buchanan).

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On the other hand, there are a lot of boundaries on the way to determine the particular global government institution as a legitimate one. This change requires a lot of new rules and mechanisms of setting the relations between the institution and the society, as its legitimacy determines particular relation towards its actions and laws, a portion of respect towards its role and its functioning. It also creates new roles of the agents of the institution (Beeson and Bell 2009). The new requirements are of a very complicated nature and so different in the content that only a very small number of global governance institutions can compete for the legitimacy. But the term, that is in its nature a social one, gives so many real practical advantages to the institution and its supporters, that the legitimacy question is one of the most touching for the leaders of the global governance institutions.

Studying the nature of legitimacy, we can evaluate the legitimacy of such unilateral institutions as G8 and G20. In the social meaning, they can be considered legitimate, as a lot of actors believe in their right to set their own rules and elaborate initiatives that influence the whole world. This is so due to the fact that they already proved they do. Talking about the normative meaning, we can find a lot of criticism on the topic of legitimacy of the forums. The G8 as a forum for the executive leaders of the most powerful countries was formed as it exists now in 1996 (Reus-Smit 2007). The participation of Russia added the forum some reason to be called legitimate, as this country is the largest in the world and has a considerable amount of citizens. But, on the other hand, the political regime within the country made the forum less reputable. The main criticism of its legitimacy lies in the fact that the forum of countries that, in fact, represent less than a half of the world population and occupy only a part of its territory, can't decide for the rest of the countries. This argument is quite reasonable. The G20 was founded in 1999 and was concentrated on the financial sector of the issue in the world.

The economy deserved more special attention and the cooperation of the Finance Ministers and governors of Central bank was considered as the solution to the series of economic crises in different regions. When the time passed, the G20 showed its importance in the frame of one of the hardest world financial crises. In 2009, on the G20 forum it was stated that the G20 replaced the G8 on its leading position within the sphere of executive level conference. This was reasonable, because during the last decade forum elaborated the series of problem-solving initiatives in the spheres not directly connected with the economy, such as terrorism and climate change. But this does not mean that the G8 stopped its existence, as it still functions and the meetings are organized yearly (Callaghan 2013). The specification of the forums is that there is no particular treaty or other official document on the base of which they were created. There is no strict structure or base that supports the institutions. But despite this, they do act and the decisions made within the forums influence other countries and have a real political and economic weight. There exists some separation of document base and real power, so the legitimacy is very doubtful in this situation.

Talking about contemporary global politics, the G20 was supported and evaluated for the role it played in coping with the world financial crisis of 2008, but it is considered as ineffective, as there are no real documented decisions that were recommended for consideration to the countries. The forum is more like a private meeting that now became far more reliable than the prior ones. The fact that now the impact of the United States and the European Union became less dominant gave more democratic features to the organization. It includes the most influential and powerful economics from all the regions of the world, so it can now be more objective and systematic in its considerations and decisions. But the fact is that if it becomes more effective, this will lead to the rising criticism of the legitimacy question. The forum has no legal base and no official treaties. This in addition to the fact that the member countries are the leaders within their regions; this makes the countries outside the forum argue about the impact they face because of the G20 consultations. But the legitimacy is not that simple. It is more complex and can refer to other spheres of the G20 function. The forum gives an opportunity for the world leaders to share their experience in the most important aspects of governing. Another important feature of the G20 is personal contact that is being set among the leaders during the direct dialogue, discussions and consultations. The forum gives

additional abilities in the bilateral meetings to solve the problems between the concrete countries. A lot of countries got the opportunity to study their regional problems in the more wide aspect and see how it influences the whole world. This gives the important knowledge to those who participate in politics. It is especially important to the countries that became the world leaders not so long ago and still need experience on this new scale. This is followed by the fact that the forum provides the ability to solve the conflicts and disagreements between the states. The truth is that G20 also did not lead to any concrete solution to the 2008 financial crisis or estimation to what extent it would develop (Callaghan 2013).

The evidence shows that the forum did appear important, as the meetings in 2008 and 2009 helped to quickly react to the series of problems that the crisis produced. This fact attracted a lot of attention towards the forum, as the future of the institution appeared unknown and many specialists discussed the ability of G20 to become the leading global governance institution (Lawson-Remer 2012). This period can also be characterized as a crisis in world politics that appeared before the economic one. The attractiveness of the G20 became even more obvious in this frame, as it gave the ability for their constructive dialogue and coordinated action. This feature appears quite suitable and gains more importance in the modern world (Reus-Smit 2007). As we can see, this multilateral cooperation is more concentrated on action and its impact than on the process and documents. This is determined generally by the sphere of action – while politics is more specific from region to region and is more subjective, the financial is finance everywhere and the financial problems are equal everywhere, plus the financial needs real action, while politics is more about the procedure and how the participants act in public. The power of the decisions made by the forum is based on the power of its members. But the countries outside the cooperation might refuse to accept these decisions and claim the legitimacy of the whole institution. This looks quite reasonable, as the G20 is not a part of the United Nations and does not cooperate with any other reputable international organizations. The effectiveness in this situation is more important, so the participants choose to indirectly enforce the other countries to accept the decisions, which also diminishes the possible legitimacy of the forum (Cooper 2010). Another reason to doubt the effectiveness of the forums is that many analysts note the fact the G20 probably needs more money than it gives in the end. The last meeting in Canada required millions

of dollars from the state budget to influence the countries that are not even the members of the group. Of course this fact disturbs the citizens of the member states. But the lack of legitimacy also determines the effectiveness of the forum, as it really reached some of its targets forming the Financial Stability Board and setting other initiatives to reduce the consequences of crisis. In addition, the fact that there is no particular secretariat and header, the list of questions to discuss is formed each year in the free order, and it gives the opportunity to discuss the urgent problems and touch a variety of different problems (Callaghan 2013). This aspect is also very topical, as today some members talk about the formation of some special forum secretariat to make the institution more organized and structured. Some members find the importance in including a series of new members to make the forum more widespread in its views and ideas. These innovations that are pushed by different member-states all aim in general at the rising authority and impact of the institution and, therefore, growth of its legitimacy (Cooper 2010). According to all evidences, the importance of the legitimate status of G20 is obvious to the countries that participate in the cooperation and the institutions and agents that support it in order to gain concrete benefits.

From my point of view, the G8 and G20 forums can be considered as legitimate and effective. Although there are a lot of doubts about the particular results of their actions or the impact the institutions have, but in the end they do affect the international policy and they are effective. The far more liberal and democratic multilateralism is, in fact, a big lie. The powerful countries never really believed in the equality of all the members of international process. The decisions of such organizations as the UN are usually predictable, because we know who makes the real decision. But this illusion of democracy in the critical situations might cost the society not only a bigger sum of money, but a lot of time and strength, which we can't afford. The G8 was created in order to try minilateralism as another variant of international cooperation. Here, the leaders of the state members spend less time and money and though get more opportunities in terms of important things. The agenda can be changed in accordance with the contemporary situation and the opened dialogue without many formalities leads to the reducing of pressure among the countries. The forum proved its efficiency in 2008 with the beginning of the financial crisis, as this institution concentrated on the economic issues and the regular meetings helped the leading world powers to elaborate a set of coordinated actions in order to improve the

situation in complex and in every particular region. The G8 still exists, as the leading countries still find it useful to meet regularly in less official manner in order to discuss the international situation. The G20 appears to be more liberal and objective, because it involves a series of the leading countries from other parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa and Asia (Beeson and Bell 2009). The forum is seen as effective, because all the members still prefer to keep the meetings despite all the differences and the existence of other institutions that are considered to be more legitimate, democratic and progressive. The series of members even try to push forward the ideas of creation of the secretariat of the forum or involvement of the new members. But this point of view is fairly criticized by the countries that are out of the forum. They have right to refuse accepting the forum and the decisions made within it, but the truth is that the powerful actor decides and their criticism can hardly change this order. The forum works and gives certain benefits. It is not effective in all of its actions and not all the effects it creates are profitable. But G20 helps the world leaders to set up a dialogue, and the fact that this dialogue can be constructive, respectable, and stable gives hope for other changes in the international relations and diplomacy.

In this paper the question of the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G8 and G20 forums within the contemporary global politics was studied. It was important to refer to its theoretical and empirical implications. First of all, the G8 and G20 have to be understood as the minilateralist institutions that appeared on the world arena as an alternative to multilateralism that is represented by the variety of international organizations, such as UN, NATO and others. Multilateralism gained its popularity after the Second World War, when all countries wanted to settle the dialogue on the principle of equality. The creation of these new institutions of a new nature provoked a lot of criticism of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the forums. The countries that are not involved in the meeting of the forums do not understand why they should follow the recommendations of these institutions. The absence of the treaties that founded the institution and the absence of the documental base make the forums not officially influential. But the forums have real impact and real effectiveness. This can be seen after the 2008 economic crisis, when the G20 meetings helped the countries to cope with the horrible consequences of the financial crisis and find the possible variants of reducing it. The evidence shows also negative impact of the G8 and G20, but the benefits exist. The forums are very specific and as they do not have the real judicial

base and no structure or header, they do not pretend to be at the same level with the universally accepted international organizations. They are just specific institution, and not the last one in its specifications, as the international policy is changing and the society has to be ready to face some innovations in this sphere, especially after the crisis, which clearly demonstrates the fail of the prior system functioning. The real value represents the effectiveness of the institution, and the G8 and G20 can be the examples in this field.

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