

Climate Policy and the G20 Agenda: The Opportunities and Limitations in Ensuring a Sustainable Future

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Abstract:

Climate change poses one of the largest threats to human existence. International organizations, such as the G20 Summit, have not only the ability, but the duty, to address this crisis. In this analysis, I argue that the G20 has deep economic interest in promoting climate policy, as a healthy planet can allow for sustained economic growth and soundness. I extend upon this idea of stability, as I analyze the role of climate in international conflict, another issue the G20 aims at preventing. Through my analysis, I conclude that though the G20 has the ability and interest in solving the “climate problem”, this organization of powerful nation states must overcome the limitations of exclusivity. The G20 summit must include poorer economies within the climate debate, as the world’s poor are already feeling the effects of a rising temperatures and sea levels. Solving global warming will allow for not only the stability of global economies and societies, but the continuation of human existence.

Introduction:

The G20 summit, consisting of some of the world’s strongest nation states, acts as an effective platform for international economic and financial cooperation. In a letter outlining the priorities of the upcoming 2017 summit in Hamburg, German Chancellor Angela Merkel states, “The G20 contributes significantly to strengthening the stability and resilience of the world economy and,

last but not least, to increasing security for each and every one of us.”¹ Simultaneously, world leaders have voiced increasing concern over the ecological health of the planet. Scientists project that global temperatures will rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius by mid-century, a point at which humans will feel the most damaging and traumatic effects of climate change. The Paris Accord established in 2015 stood as a clear action taken by the international community to not only react to, but offensively tackle a warming planet. In this analysis, I will explore the tools and resources the G20 has to not only enforce, but extend the reach of the Paris Climate Agreement. I will outline the history of international climate policy, which will allow for a deeper context leading up to the 2015 accord. This analysis will then continue to discuss the strong interests and holdings the G20 has (it being a primarily financial and economic forum) in promoting environmental health, clean energy investment, and sustainability. Furthermore, highlighting the progress that G20 countries have made towards environmental sustainability will allow for readers to understand the challenges in tackling climate change on a global level. I argue that while an offensive approach is needed, the summit must do more to hold states accountable to their carbon commitments as well as to address the large populations already experiencing drastic, direct effects of warming temperatures and environmental exploitation. The G20 has the opportunity to engage in an interdisciplinary discussion amongst all facets of the international community in order to effectively support and implement economic strategy. In doing so, the summit has the ability to become an effective mechanism for the support and furtherment of the Paris Climate Agreement and other international actions against climate change.

History of Climate Policy Within an International Framework

¹ Merkel, Angela. “Priorities of the 2017 G20 Summit”

In order to understand the current G20 climate agenda, one must analyze the history of international climate action. In 1987, world leaders signed the Montreal Protocol, which called for the incremental elimination of substances that deplete the ozone layer. The agreement marked one of the first multilateral efforts to combat climate change. The protocol also acted as a precursor to the Rio Declaration, a subset of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This short document was a crucial starting point for proceeding negotiations, as it recognized the concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. The document states that “In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.”² The international community agreed that developed nations would have to pay for the damage that they had created. The term also encapsulates any special circumstances of a particular nation state, such as resource availability, access to technology, and financial capabilities.

In 1994, The United Nations Framework on Climate Change came into effect. According to the UNFCCC, the convention aimed for “the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system”.³ This agreement also established the essential idea of Annex 1 and Non-Annex 1 countries, which allowed the international community to identify developed countries who had polluted over a long period of time. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, extended the power of the UNFCCC by establishing clear emission reduction commitments between the years of 2008 and 2012. The Doha amendment to the Kyoto protocol

² CISDL Legal Brief. “The Principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities: Origins and Scope”

³ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. “The Convention in Summary”

established a second period of commitments extending to 2020. Officials also established market-based mechanisms for carbon trading between countries. These flexible mechanisms include International Emissions Trading, The Clean Development Mechanism, and Joint Implementation. These policies make it easier for both Annex 1 and developing nations to meet carbon goals while preserving GDP and economic growth.

The Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 is the most recent milestone in international environmental negotiations. The agreement, which aims to limit the rise of global temperatures by no more than 2 degrees Celsius, also outlines Nationally Determined Contributions. These contributions require countries to create their own carbon cutting benchmarks. Countries are to also evaluate themselves every five years in order to measure collective international progress. An important landmark, the Paris Agreement allowed for international cooperation amongst 197 countries while acknowledging the importance and urgency of environmental degradation.⁴

A Literature Review: Current Approaches and Arguments Toward Implementing Reform

In order to analyze the progress and challenges facing G20 countries, one should identify the current global strategies used to create international consensus. An essay written by Robert Falkner of the London School of Economics highlights the current approach as a “Global Deal Strategy”, which “prescribes, in a top-down way, generally applicable policies that are based on commonly understood principles.”⁵The Global Deal Strategy also “is intended to be universal in its application, applying to all countries according to agreed principles of burden sharing (while) seeking to establish legally binding international obligations.”⁶ The benefits of

⁴ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Paris Agreement”

⁵ Falkner, Robert. “International Climate Policy after Copenhagen: Towards a ‘Building Blocks’ Approach”. Pg 252.

⁶ Falkner, Robert. “International Climate Policy after Copenhagen: Towards a ‘Building Blocks’ Approach”. Pg 253.

this kind of approach seem clear: all countries establish themselves as proponents of climate action while putting in place sound policies.

However, Falkner argues that this approach does not make for the most efficient method of reform. In the text, he argues that Global Deals such as The Kyoto Protocol required many compromises that “severely curtailed its environmental effectiveness”. Instead, Falkner argues for a “Building Blocks” approach, which he states has already taken a foothold in policy negotiations. The Building Blocks approach allows nation states to take baby steps toward policy implementation, while “slowly embedding it into their international framework”. The Stanford Law Journal highlights these steps as tapping non-climate incentives, the promotion of transnational greenhouse gas regulatory programs, and recognizing the benefits of carbon reduction throughout several subsets of national agendas. Richard Stewart of the Stanford Law Journal states that “This approach provides rich ground for transnational cooperation that includes developing country government bodies and firms.”⁷The Building Blocks approach allows for the inclusive, detailed oriented approach that the G20 and other international organizations desperately need to adapt in order to more efficiently approach carbon reduction.

One must look beyond theoretical approaches to examine the underlying issue of national accountability and responsibility. Though G20 nations create the vast majority of CO₂ emissions, poor nations, the so called “global south” will feel the most brutal effects of climate change. This north/south divide traces its roots back to the colonial era, as Europe (The North) exploited much of Africa and Asia for its natural resources and human capital. According to Chad Winfield of Washington State University, the Belgian government allowed for the export of over 1500 tons of rubber from the Congo by the year 1897 in order to manufacture car wheels. He argues that the excessive harvesting of rubber and other materials stunted the growth of the

⁷ Stewart, Richard. Oppenheimer, Michael. Rudyk, Bryce. “Building Blocks for Global Climate Protection”. Pg 361.

country while hindering its ability to catch-up to other world powers post-independence.⁸ In many other cases, Europe and the Americas saw for great economic prosperity, while their southern counterparts suffered from resource depletion and exploitation. The wounds of colonization still lie open, as global inequality remains intact. In fact, The Royal Geographic Society measures Western Europe's income per capita 13 times higher than that of Africa's.⁹

Though the north/south divide remains highly relevant and important within international negotiations, some scholars believe that there are serious implications in creating distinct differences between the two regions. Scholars Andrea Wolvers, Oliver Tappe, Tijo Salverda, and Tobias Schwarz of the University of Cologne discuss the dangers of creating such categorizations within their study entitled *Concepts of the Global South*. Tobias Schwarz argues that "With a container concept like the "the South", we group very different historical experiences and current realities together into one homogenizing category." Furthermore, the creation of a north and south assumes a power dynamic and history that might be inaccurate or oversimplified.¹⁰ The reduction of such histories can be dangerous when trying to implement effective policy on a global scale. These scholars agree that the international community needs to recognize trauma reminiscent of the colonial era and must make efforts to account for this when taking international action. State actors will need to address the various ills left over from periods of occupation to produce international climate policies that are both equitable and effective.

There also exists a wide discrepancy between "legacy" polluters and emerging industrial economies, such as China and India. These divides amongst state actors have had an important role in the promotion of climate policy, as well as the roadblocks that future climate action faces. Scholars argue that it is no longer in the best interest of developed nations to

⁸ Winfield, Chad. "Colonization and Natural resources"

⁹ The Royal Geographic Society. "The Global North/South Divide"

¹⁰ Wolvers, Andrea. Tappe, Oliver. Salverda, Tijo. Schwarz, Tobias. "Concepts of the Global South"

ignore the concerns of the global south. Hannah Brock of the Oxford Research Group explains that “In a globalised world in which no nation’s security is independent of their region or of the wider international community, the opinions of the majority world can no longer be neglected by the major powers who seek to direct global security priorities.”¹¹ However, it can seem effortless for the G20 to disassociate itself from from the poor while hailing allegiance to big business and financial institutions.

In addition, many argue that Annex 1 countries can no longer escape a long history of greenhouse gas emission. The UNFCCC aimed at identifying such countries in order to come up with a comparable climate solution amongst all nation states. However, some researchers disagree with the idea of “historic responsibilities”. Jose Goldemberg of the University of Sao Paulo cites that developing nations will have contributed to 56 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. He states that putting a high level of “shaming and blaming” on developed nations may help compensate for any prior environmental damage, but will do nothing to combat future anthropogenic threats. Goldemberg furthers his argument by raising doubts in regards to the effectiveness of the shaming past environmental degradation. “The “historical responsibilities” argument has been used - somewhat perversely - to justify the lack of effort of non-Annex I Countries to follow a low carbon trajectory.” These differing standpoints only support the need for a more open, inclusive debate between G20 members and less developed nations.¹²

Climate Change: The Collective Interest

After analyzing opposing standpoints surrounding climate policy, one must examine the summit’s own interests in promoting climate-friendly guidelines as part of their economic agenda. In short, world financial leaders and businesses must see a healthy planet as the

¹¹ Brock, Hannah. “Climate Change and Insecurity in the Global South”

¹² Goldemberg, Jose. “Climate Change and Historical Responsibilities”

number one strengthener of economic sustainability and viability. Both developed and emerging economies are at risk for “large-scale shocks” and GDP loss. According to The Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) conducted in 1995, economies around the world would suffer a loss of water supply, decreased agricultural yields, and an increased risk for extreme natural disasters, such as typhoons and hurricanes. A study sponsored by the British government in 2006 found that improper action against warming temperatures would risk the loss of 5% global GDP per year.

Global economic losses attributed to climate change will disproportionately hurt the world’s poorest people, while deepening financial disparities. According to the IPCC, these people lack the proper living conditions needed to withstand extreme weather events, as well as insurance to cover damages associated with such events. The Environmental Justice Foundation cited in 2009 that 150 million people would be displaced due to climate-related disasters in the next 40 years. In 2008, a cyclone in Myanmar killed between 78 and 125 thousand people, while displacing 800,000. This wide-spread death and upheaval occurred in a country where 25 percent of all people live below the poverty mark (according to the Asian Development Bank).

It is worth discussing the moral and financial obligations between “legacy” polluters and those polluters who are associated with emerging economies. As of 2016, China contributed about 21.7 percent of all greenhouse emissions, while the United States contributes around 13.5 percent of total global emissions.¹³ However, if we recall the establishment of Common but Differential Responsibilities, nation states such as the U.S have polluted for a much longer period of time (since the industrial revolution beginning in the late 18th century), and therefore must pay accordingly.

¹³ “The Hangzhou Summit: Climate Change and Green Finance”

Responsible climate policy lies the G20's best interest, as to minimize serious international security threats. The summit must prepare for the large amounts of people who will leave their homes due to flooding and other natural disasters. World leaders must prepare for the mass-movement of people not only within their own borders, but between borders as well. According to the UN Refugee Agency, a total of 22 million people have been displaced due to extreme weather events since 2008. International conflicts, fueled by institutional instability, will only escalate due to famine and drought. The American Security Project deems climate change "an "Accelerant of Instability" or a "Threat Multiplier" that makes already existing threats worse."¹⁴ The project cites these multipliers as resource scarcity, extreme weather, food scarcity, water insecurity, and sea level rise. These factors of instability pose a particular problem for developing nations, as a 2015 Pew Research study found that 52 percent of 31 developing nations were dissatisfied with their political system. A fragile, unpopular government charged with the oversight of a climate-induced humanitarian crisis could lead to conflict, as seen at the beginning of the Syrian Civil War. A document published in 2015 by the United States Department of Defense stated that "a severe multi-year drought affected Syria and contributed to massive agriculture failures and population displacements. Large movements of rural dwellers to city centers coincided with the presence of large numbers of Iraqi refugees in Syrian cities, effectively overwhelming institutional capacity to respond constructively to the changing service demands."¹⁵ In turn, these factors made way for civil war, and what is now a multidimensional, international conflict.

As seen in the Syrian case study, world powers such as the United States must accept the risk international instability holds. The overflows and entanglements associated with the Syrian Civil War have strained U.S.-Russian relations while leading President Trump to

¹⁴ The American Security Project. "Climate Security: Building National Security"

¹⁵ The United States Department of Defense. "National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate"

authorize a missile strike on a Syrian air base in April of 2017. Furthermore, the G20 cannot depend on the deteriorating stability of key diplomatic relations while engaging in entangling international conflict. The magnification of these conflicts sparked by natural disasters only highlights the need for strong climate commitments, as these goals can allow for increased global security.

It is important to also note the positive effects sustainable reforms can have on the financial sector and world economy. Adapting new policies can allow for new opportunities amongst investors. For example, investment in renewable energy will allow backers to withstand the steep market decreases in coal and other out-of-date energy sources, as emphasized by leaders at the Hangzhou negotiations.

Figure 1 (below) shows that both the private and public sectors are increasing climate investments. Furthermore, World Economic Forum experts argue that a diverse portfolio can deem financially sound and environmentally friendly, citing a 16.7 billion dollar investment in mobilized climate finance in 2014.

Figure 1: Mobilised climate finance in 2013 and 2014, by funding source (USD billions)



Source: OECD analysis. Note: Numbers in this figure may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

Figure 1 Source: World Economic Forum

A shift towards renewable energy and other technology represents the future of the global marketplace. By supporting such a transition, the G20 will see itself at the forefront of innovation and economic opportunity.

The G20 as an Effective Platform to Implement Climate Policy:

The G20 summit can act as an effective mechanism for environmental reform, as members make up around three-quarters of global GDP. Furthermore, the movement toward environmental sustainability needs the G20 in order to succeed. Economic and business objectives have acted as one of the most effective ways to combat rising global temperatures. Peter Bakker, the president and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development states ““By 2030, business would cut its emissions by 3.7 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent a year – half a ton of carbon dioxide for every person on the planet, every year. If all the relevant companies signed up to these initiatives, the total impact could reach 10 billion tons every year.”¹⁶ Wealthy businesses and financial organizations have the ability to influence sustainability through investment and innovation. These organizations also have a certain mobility that governmental institutions lack, as they can act fast on developing technology. For example, data provided by Bloomberg shows that investment in renewable energy has outpaced any investment in coal and other fossil fuels.

¹⁶ Bakker, Peter. “The Role of Business in Climate Change”

Investments in Varying Energy Sectors

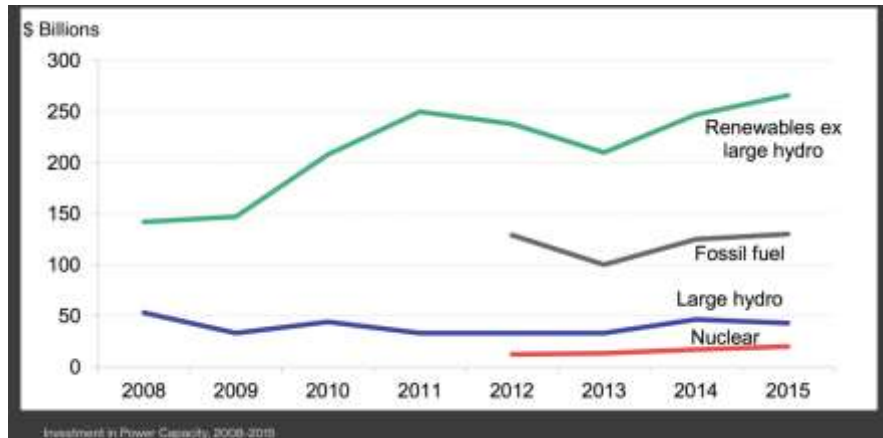


Figure 2 Source: BNEF, UNE

The Bloomberg report also states that renewables are increasingly cheaper to produce, as solar is now 1/150th of what it cost in the 1970's.

Aside from promoting renewable investment, the G20 can also act as a useful tool to combat climate change by supporting certain market mechanisms used to influence environmental policy. For example, a recent 2017 article in the BBC written by Roger Harrabin cited that Germany would push for a carbon price at the upcoming Hamburg summit. Thorsten Herdan, a member of the Financial Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, stated within the article that they would incorporate the tax into a world that was slowly shying away from the use of coal and other non-renewables.¹⁷

The G20 holds the power to both leverage and compromise, both of which are effective strategies in climate negotiations. The German delegation to the upcoming summit hopes to effectively lower emissions by negotiating with even the world's strongest global warming deniers. Merkel and other officials hope to persuade President Trump that the global economy has already transitioned to favor clean energy and other technology. Even without the support of the U.S President, Germany has continued to further multilateral negotiations. According to

¹⁷ Harrabin, Roger. "Germany to Push for Carbon Price at G20"

Reuters, the German government offered India 2.25 billion dollars in 2015 to jumpstart clean energy and solar projects.

Progress in Implementing Effective Climate Policy:

The international community has taken some steps to combat the effects of climate change, as nation states have also implemented several domestic policies to complement multilateral action. The signing of the Paris Climate Agreement is a significant milestone in international cooperation. Some G20 leaders have committed themselves to upholding and extending the reach of this agreement. In the 2016 Hangzhou summit, Chinese president Xi Jinping stated that “We are determined to promote inclusive and interconnected development so that G20 cooperation will deliver benefits to the whole world. For the first time, we have given priority to development in the global macro-policy framework. For the first time, we have devised a groundbreaking Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We agree to encourage the early entry into effect of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.”¹⁸The Chinese government has implemented policy which has shown consistent with their G20 commitments, as they have promised to decrease total energy intensity by 15 percent by the year 2020 (60 percent by 2030), establish carbon trading programs, and have capped total coal consumption.

¹⁸ Xi, Jinping. “The Hangzhou Summit: Towards an Innovative, Invigorated, Interconnected and Inclusive World Economy”

Overview of Share of Coal in G20 Economies

Overview of share of coal in G20 economies				
G20 member	Coal production (Mtoe, 2015)	Coal exports (million tonnes, 2013)	Primary energy consumption: coal (Mtoe, 2015)	Coal share of electricity generation (2013)
Argentina	-	-	1.4	2.4%
Australia	275.0	336.1	46.6	64.7%
Brazil	3.4	-	17.4	3.8%
Canada	35.8	39.1	19.8	10.0%
China	1,827.0	5.6	1,920.4	75.4%
France	-	-	8.7	4.4%
Germany	42.9	-	78.3	46.8%
India	283.9	-	407.2	72.8%
Indonesia	241.1	410.9	80.3	51.2%
Italy	-	-	12.4	16.8%
Japan	0.6	-	119.4	32.4%
Korea	0.8	-	84.5	41.4%
Mexico	7.0	-	12.8	10.8%
Russia	176.6	140.8	88.7	15.2%
Saudi Arabia	-	-	0.1	0.0%
South Africa	142.9	74.6	85.0	93.7%
Turkey	16.4	-	34.4	26.6%
United Kingdom	5.3	-	23.4	37%
United States	455.2	106.7	396.3	39.9%
European Union	145.3	-	262.4	27.5%

Figure 3 Source: World Bank, BP Energy Outlook

Chancellor Merkel has elaborated on Germany's own commitments prior to the Hamburg summit, sculpting Germany into a world leader on sustainable development. "During its G20 Presidency, Germany not only aims to ensure the stability of the global economy, but also, and this is the second pillar, to make it more fit for the future. One main concern is to make progress on realising the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change."¹⁹

¹⁹ Merkel, Angela. "Priorities of the 2017 G20 Summit"

Beyond promises by Germany and China, nations have committed 100 billion dollars towards adaptation funding while setting goals for individual, state-implemented carbon reductions. For example, The United States wants to cut carbon emissions by as much as 28 percent from 2005 levels. The IPCC and other international organizations have called for “cooperative” measures, and have set up a timeline in which to take stock of individual nation’s progress towards curbing emissions. Ten percent of the total G20 St. Petersburg declaration committed itself to the discussion of climate change. In short, sustainability has become very prevalent in the language of the international community, which allows for beneficial discussion and debate.

International markets and businesses have also progressed to embrace a green economy. For example, technology transfers and clean energy investments have increased, as well as efforts to improve efficiency in cars and in the building sector. The business and financial sectors have the ability to check international and domestic organizations in order to push them into a clean energy future.

International organizations such as the G20 and IPCC must do more to keep individual nation states accountable for cutting emissions. Though the IPCC and Paris Climate Agreement have allowed for “stockpiling”, there must exist mechanisms which extend beyond “naming and shaming”, which only really acts as a slap on the wrist. Experts such as Goldemberg have pointed to the merit and effectiveness of such tactics. As Figure 3 shows, for example, G20 countries such as Australia, Argentina, Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia need to do more to implement clear, transparent commitments. Saudi Arabia still defends its oil interests, while Italy has still not implemented a comprehensive carbon cutting initiative. Figure 4, collected by the Climate Transparency Report, measures the progress of G20 nations in implementing regulations.

G20 Progress Checklist



Figure 4 Source: Climate Transparency Report

Organizations such as Climate Transparency, will publish documents such as the Brown to Green Report, which will “provide a credible and comprehensive comparison of the climate performance of G20 countries to stimulate national debate in these countries.”²⁰ Increased communication and clarity will only allow for the furthering of cooperation amongst G20 countries and their domestic partners.

Challenges and Threats to the G20 Climate Agenda:

Though making continuous strides towards a sustainable future, G20 countries will face increased challenges in terms of international cooperation and commitment. The process to

²⁰ Climate Transparency. “The Brown to Green Report”

draw and implement strategies deems a long and grueling process. Only half of G20 countries have development plans set for the year 2050, while countries such as Italy still do not have a comprehensive energy policy in place. 54 countries still have to ratify the Paris Climate Agreement. Transparency amongst nations will also act as a road block, as Australia has asked the UNFCCC not to publish emissions data from this past year. In addition, Turkey lacks any kind of enforcement or measuring component to their carbon cutting strategy.

A lack of effective leadership has/will hinder the G20 going forward, as climate change deniers hold key positions within climate negotiations. A substantial barrier arose in 2011, when Canada decided to pull out of the Kyoto Protocol. Three years later, Tony Abbott, the former Prime minister of Australia, cut an essential carbon tax. President Donald Trump of the United States has stated prior to the upcoming Hamburg summit that he does not believe in climate change, while recently signing an executive order that would decrease federal regulations on the fossil fuel industry. The president's proposed budget allows for a 31 percent cut to the Environmental Protection agency, which could have disastrous domestic and international consequences. Further opposition from the Trump administration and Saudi Arabia resulted in the dropping of climate change from discussion within the upcoming G20 communique.

Addressing developing nation states and the global south will also pose challenging for G20 countries. The most powerful economies in the world must face the fact that some of the most vulnerable people will be disproportionately affected by a warming planet. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, stated in 2016 that "They face the adverse impact of climate change more than anyone else. This includes cyclones, droughts, floods, heat waves, and rising sea levels. The poor, vulnerable and other marginalized groups have fewer resources to cope with climate disasters."²¹ A continued effort must be made to determine how to aid these people while addressing increased global conflicts and migrations due to dramatic weather patterns.

²¹ Modi, Narendra. "Adapting to Climate Change is an Opportunity"

According to The World Bank, “Agriculture is one of the most important economic sectors in many poor countries. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most sensitive to climate change given its dependence on weather conditions, both directly and through climate-dependent stressors (pests, epidemics, and sea level rise).”²² The forum must create solutions for those who not have enough water to drink or food to eat. The G20 needs to uplift the most marginalized populations while also teaching climate-friendly methods of development.

As a primarily financial forum, the G20 must address how economies can grow while also creating a healthy planet. In order to solve this challenge, the international community must more clearly define “sustainability” while also giving incentives to emerging economies. Modi states in his contribution to the G20 Hangzhou Handbook that the world must “avoid the contradictions between growing and growing sustainably”.²³ These contradictions can be avoided through the adherence to a “building-blocks” strategy, which will allow actors to more easily incorporate climate policy into their national identities while creating a way of sustainable living. As Stewart argues, this method not only allows for an embodiment of policy, but for an embodiment of inclusive dialogue between developed and developing nations. Confronting the challenges of international cooperation and compromise, the G20 can better implement and build upon established climate action.

Conclusion:

The G20 has the ability to act as a platform for significant economic, political, and social change. The summit has the influence to tackle the world’s most urgent question: How will populations exist in a world with higher temperatures, decreased resources, and a higher risk for natural disasters and warfare? Climate Change is unique in that it encompasses the

²² The World Bank. “See What Climate Change Means for the World’s Poor”

²³ Modi, Narendra. “Adapting to Climate Change is an Opportunity”

interests of many, while also acting as a very polarizing and divisive issue. Throughout my analysis, I have argued that the G20 and the rest of the international community have taken significant first steps on a quest towards environmental improvement and sustainability, but must promote for more substantial climate action. The G20 must act as a more inclusive body, encompassing not only the strongest economies, but those economies and people who have the most to lose as temperatures increase.

In order to provide a well-rounded analysis of the G20's role in climate policy, one must question as to whether the G20 is the most effective platform to implement change. I have argued how the G20 can provide a space for the world's top economies to discuss economic incentives and the role of market mechanisms in climate policy. However, the G20 does not act for an inclusive environment for all to voice their opinions. In fact, those on the margins will stay on the margins. In a cynical world, one could argue that it actually benefits G20 countries to maintain a kind of chokehold on weaker economies, on the world's poor. An international conversation on Climate Change will need to include a broader discussion on civil rights, social equity, and institutional incompetence. Policymakers must examine these power structures before attempting to create a healthy, more peaceful planet for future generations. In broadening and expanding such dialogue, the G20 can effectively further the policies and practices of the Paris Climate Agreement and other forms of international cooperation.

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