

# WHAT GAMES ARE BEING PLAYED? GLOBAL POLICY FORUM 2022



Submitted to  
Policy Area 9 – Impact and Potential of Digital Development Collaboration

Task Force 2  
T20 Indonesia 2022/G20 Indonesia 2022

Based on Review of  
Global Policy Forum  
June 20-21, 2022

*Third in a series. The other two:*

1. Operationalizing “Empowering Digital Citizens: Making Humane Markets Work in the Digital Age”  
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8ptzz5>
2. Expressive Knowledge: The Seminal Global Public Good <https://tinyurl.com/mt83rshh>

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June 23, 2022

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## Introduction

On the eve of the T20 policy brief publication, the *2022 Global Policy Forum* (GPF) constitutes the last word with respect to T20 input for the Indonesia round. Earlier discussions were centered on a need to hold fast to longstanding G20 commitments with respect to health, climate, digital growth, and sustainability and largely ignore the elephant in the room, the war. These sessions were principally about the elephant.

Not that the participants didn't try. The good news is that China has not broken faith with global markets and followed Russia's bellicose behavior, but it is talking the talk a bit.

The good times haven't been forestalled, but they are sorely at risk. GPF commentators cautiously outline a narrow path to success based on a few truisms for the time: Don't poke the panda but do poke the bear. Skate on thin political mandates to maintain some level of globalization and international cooperation. Steel governance patterns for a possible if not likely flip back to populism within the G7, if not the G20 countries. Care, even if risks are present, as the risks of not caring promise an even greater sting, including the possible loss of democracy's and liberalism's edge. Astonishingly, it is possible that things could go dark.

GPF 2022 did not promise, nor did it deliver silver bullets with respect to global affairs. As to policy itself, important 'plate-spinning' was outlined, mostly with respect to postwar institutions in their various roles. One member state as was noted is pushing for an ancient (last century) polarity, but its acolyte in the process would be the loser in the process and thus is recalcitrant to follow. Digital flourishing had unlocked discontent more than it has proven a problem-solver. This may prove to be the most relevant battlefield, as it is in sole position to unite head, hand, and heart amid the angsts of societies and the rising, turbulent seas—real ones, not metaphorical ones.

Finally, there is a patina of flippancy in the effort, made most evident in the reference to games and foreign affairs. At best, an interesting device for considering competitive decision scenarios, the concept of games and fundamental human affairs does not help. Risks are not to be embraced, but eschewed. Cooperation is of utmost importance, as brought up by many GPF participants. If there is an underlying theme to the discussions, it is that policymakers need to stop playing games. The people know they are doing it. People know that they suffer thereby. They do not know what to do about it, but they have now been empowered by the little devices in their hands and they will wield them for good or for ill.

## Select quotations and perspectives

A subset of the commentators is included here to provide some flavor as to the nature of their messages. Some others are included in the subsequent section.

### Vladimir Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy is more of a surprise than is his country. Underestimated by Donald Trump in the first instance, he approaches his responsibilities with a steely coolness that is very attractive. He may well be the model for 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership after all. He demonstrates a form of controlled governance, of restraint, but in no way submissive or passive. He considered the Ukrainian refugee crisis, five million who have left the country and seven million who have been displaced internally, as a temporary matter.

The Ukrainians represent a vibrant and cohesive society and culture. If Vladimir Putin is needy in that he needs them to be Russian, the feeling is clearly now not reciprocal. It calls to mind the neediness of Recep Erdogan, who wishes the Kurds would call themselves Turks. Similarly, he longs for the kind of kindred bulk that can make a difference in global affairs.

Most of all, Zelenskyy is not old. The picture of him with Sanna Marin, the Finnish Prime Minister, is priceless. That probably does more damage to Putin's efforts and those of other old strongmen than all the Op-eds of the world.



Figure 1: Marin and Zelensky in a photo released by his office on 26 May.  
Image: Ukrainian presidentin kanslia

They personify what the younger generation wants to be. Such young people likely do not yet know how to fight the way through all the detritus left by their predecessors to get there, but that objective is clear.

This leads to comments by Staffan de Mistura, to be considered in some depth, regarding limitations of executive branches of all kinds. They can only do one thing at a time. In our troubled world, both socio-politically and nature-based, the unitary governance problem must be solved, lest we doom the Zelenskyy's and the Marins of the future to fates like our current conundrum.

Zelenskyy emphasized that plans are intensifying regarding postwar rebuilding efforts. He sees Ukraine as being intrinsically European in nature,

particularly with respect to European values. Unfortunately, Europe and the EU are having difficulty remembering what their values are. Perhaps Zelenskyy and his countrymen and countrywomen can help to remind them and reinforce those cooperative values. This can be seen thought shifts in Polish politics in particular.

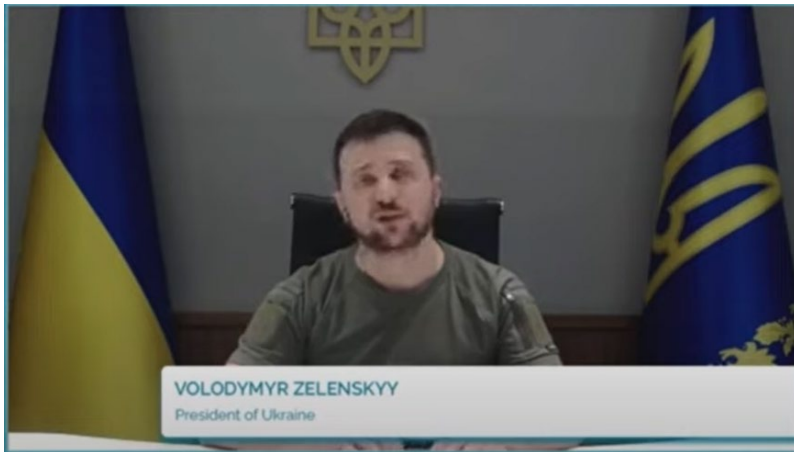


Figure 2: President Vladimir Zelenskyy during the PGF session on June 20, 2022

There is some window dressing there. The Ukrainian history has strong Soviet overtones and it will be a continuous slog to meet EU norms even as those are tenuous in some of the major states in question. Together they will have to make their way.

Those shirts are amazing, too. The one he wore in the presentation had the most amazing pockets on the sleeves. This matters more now than it may have in the past. Once again, it is the young and the hip, to use a dated term to be sure, vs the old powermongers. The American politician that criticized Zelenskyy's t-shirt wearing was way out of his league.

## Paolo Gentiloni

As EU Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni's words are weighty. His comments mirrored those from Zelenskyy, but from the supply side. He regularly called attention to the *Next Gen EU* plans, how it was important to make the associated funds count. He emphasized the critical nature of cloud technologies, even to the point to industrial policy as a need in that direction.

He apologized for being gloomy, but his assessment was largely optimistic. EU has many plans in place to address fundamental governance questions and there are substantial financial commitments in this regard. He did not mention anti-EU sentiments, in Italy no less.

## Mathias Cormann

Speaking for OECD, Cormann made it clear that plans are in place to leverage climate change opportunities above all. Fundamental to these are net zero goals and digital immersion. He emphasizes cooperation. It is important to note that this refers to more direct action and less dependence on supposed markets. He is not anti-market to be sure, but strongly implies that there are times and places for each kind of approach.

The three big factors in his mind are aligning recovery efforts with net zero carbon programs, bringing together digital and green projects, and providing social safety nets to be administered differently in different regions and locales.

## Staffan de Mistura

He insists that governments are incapable of carrying out more than one kind of initiative at one time. This is likely to mean that executive efforts of governments share such a limitation. Obviously, governments do many things at once. Tied to this, as he indicated, is an inability of the press or other involved parties to consider a multitude of priorities at any one time. His point, as well, is that such priorities are often forced on governments in inopportune times.

As a peace negotiator, his perspective is skewed to the basics, some might say the worst, of human behavior. He does not come off as cynical, however. He just blithely states that the alternative to peace is “the jungle.” Although that seems to work for him, there seem to be a plethora of creatures making their way on the public stage to whom the word jungle takes on something of a “briar patch” connotation of Br’er Rabbit fame.

Peace negotiation can be considered something of the custodial function, if not garbage collection of the governance business. He does prefer ‘prevention’ over ‘coming up with the cure’, a tip of the hat to our health friends. He recommends the use of psychology over ideology. Given that many are used to the idea of statecraft as a game, as he says, often it is the state of mind of the negotiator that drives forward the negotiations, not the well-being or other interests of the people in question.

He was a cheerleader for young professionals. He ended with a commencement speech for the Bocconi students in the audience. His words rang true, particularly given the onslaught of dystopian raiders that can increasingly be found in the hallowed halls of government and governance.

## José Manuel Barroso

As head of Gavi, the vaccine alliance, Mr. Barroso perhaps surprisingly considered broader questions than this. He lamented at the uneven distribution of vaccines throughout the world between the rich and the poor countries. He seems world-wise to the question, not shocked by the outcome. He reported the facts of maldistribution in a perfunctory manner.

Adamant about the global failure with Covid-19, he points to means of resolving the problem forthwith. He points to universal health coverage as an important objective. He refers to a need for a robust global healthcare infrastructure. He indicates that G20 is in a critical position to “help create a stronger, more resilient strategic [plan].” He criticizes current efforts as being fragmented, more than before. He calls for a strong international system of collaboration, including collective ventures, private and public.

## Joseph Stiglitz

Stiglitz takes broader swings at existing states than most. He favors changes, but he reports common benchmarks at the same time. How much structural change would he support? He broadly supports Bidens pandemic programs but

criticizes fiscal efforts to fight inflation, as he points to infrastructure limitations driving up consumer prices. He would be more of a Build Back Better proponent than a typical monetary finance specialist.

He favors bold efforts to embrace the new. The principal means of doing away with dependence on Russian energy is to drive home green investment at high-than-planned levels. He considers a lack of limits to growth in solar and wind. This may overstate growth prospects when raw materials are factored into the program. Famously there are rare earth and other exotic minerals to be considered. On the other hand, at least one other commentator mentioned other prospects that had been pushed aside by development countries for environmental or other reasons that may well be viable now.

He calls on the G20 to devise new frameworks in support of globalized, cooperative programs. He calls for short term commitments to solutions. Various frameworks requiring restructuring in his mind include: Monetary policy; debt structures; green energy finance; sanctions—with long-term implications; global health programs; vaccine rights; manufacturing in key new sectors; public-private relationships; trade; globalized taxes; logistics infrastructure, particularly in consumer markets, renewable energy, and food. He is in favor of the United States giving direct supports to the EU, partly in support of Ukraine's prospects in the war.

He is an activist and G20 is clearly his venue of choice.

### María Francesca Spatolisano

A UN policy coordinator, Dr. Spatolisano makes the case for cooperation over competition. She eschews fragmentation. Digital technologies, as outlined in the UN's "Global Digital Compact" (GDC), promotes the building of democratic societies and networks. She encourages participation in the GDC, which is accepting commentary until September 30 of this year. Her commentary underscored that we find ourselves in a unique historical inflection point.

### Gianmario Verona

He pinpoints digital technology as a general-purpose technology in the tradition of steam and electricity. Coupled with Next Gen Europe, he looks at this area as the quintessential focal area for Bocconi University, where he is Rector. He sees Europe as lagging participant behind the US and China as a major problem, as there is much demand, but little supply and hence little control. Other problems faced by Europe with respect to governance are derivatives of this one.

### KPMG

The private sector, investors in particular, are very attuned to climate risks. There is so much pressure and motivation that private interests are likely to continue to move forward irrespective of public incentives or strictures. There is unflagging commitment by large-scale investors and major corporations to net zero carbon that is independent of policy, taxes, politics, or other influences. It is finance-driven based on substantial concern for the risks of climate change. This is a global phenomenon.

### Deloitte

Along with KPMG, Deloitte is surprisingly informed in these matters. Thorne of Deloitte reports that by 2024, half of all private equity will be committed to green investment purposes. Like the need for global energy infrastructure improvements, Deloitte calls for corresponding investment goals to minimize inequality and inequity. These are viewed as being based for business, calling for "no transition unless a just one."

## Baby needs a new pair of shoes

The basic proposition of the *Global Policy Forum* of June 20-21, 2022, outlined in the keynote address, is the proposition: “Russia-Ukraine: A global game-changer.” This raises an important question from the outset: “What game or games are referenced?”

This matters, of course. Different games convey different risks. Furthermore, they promise different kinds of rewards, and many represent zero sum conditions, where gains for one side are directly reflected in losses for another. To some extent, such conditions exist in nature as they do in common board games and games of chance.

Neophytes to international relations studies and politics in general are often taken aback when faced with the regularity with which matters of state are described as games. There is a certain insider chutzpah in this tradition, as participants in the process are typically elites, at least, economically-so.<sup>1</sup> What may seem like a game to the principles is very decidedly something else to the rest of us.<sup>2</sup>

It is an important choice—one that deserves more than a little consideration. To this, we ask the question, “What is a game?”

Two sources inform us. The first, born of the Internet is the famous *Wikipedia*, which constitutes a public forum for defining and clarifying things. It is both open and rules based. Wikipedia presents twelve pages of description of the term game—containing nothing that lends understanding with respect to politics and international relations.

We turn to Oxford University, odds rights one of the main locales for consideration of international politics and games, dating back to rehearsals of what has been called the “Great Game,” which carries with some sense of the whimsy with which one associates with elite British politics. In the last throes of colonialism, the Great Game was in full swing after WWII as the European countries and Russia were competing for Central Asia and the Middle East. The former Ottoman Empire became the gameboard. Competition was flippant and secretive. Energy was at the core. On the home front, competing fuels and technologies were marginalized. Public transport was largely curtailed. The dependence on oil was purposefully imposed. Much of the GPF commentary—Stiglitz famously saying “I told you so” to the Europeans with regard to Russian oil—stems in large part from actions made in that “game”.

*Oxford English Dictionary*, just across the way on the Oxford campus from the political folks, have their own views of these terms and their significance. The OED entry for game, fifty printed pages long, makes no direct reference to politics, high or low. It covers many aspects of the word from amusements, sports, fun, pleasure, and enjoyment. The OED etymology of the word is as follows:

*Origin: A word inherited from Germanic. Etymology: Cognate with Middle Dutch (rare) game prank, mockery, Old Saxon gaman jollity, entertainment, amusement, Old High German gaman pleasure, amusement, something that causes laughter, joy, delight (Middle High German gamen fun, play), Old Icelandic gaman sport, play, pleasure, amusement, Old Swedish gaman, gamman, gammen joy, pleasure, delight (Swedish gamman), Old Danish gammen joy, pleasure, delight, joke, mockery (Danish gammen), further etymology uncertain and disputed.*

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<sup>1</sup> Hood, C., King, D., Peele, G. (Eds.). 2014. *Forging a discipline: A critical assessment of Oxford's development of the study of politics and international relations in comparative perspective*. Oxford UK: Oxford University Press.

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<sup>2</sup> Segal, D. May 14, 2022, May 14. An outsider takes an inside look at the Oxford ‘chums’ who run the U.K. *New York Times*, Available: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/14/books/simon-kuper-book-oxford.html>.

This is flippant stuff. Furthermore, in the next twenty dictionary pages contain two references to game that may have some relation to the collective good of the people. The first refers to a game as “an activity, undertaking, scheme, state of affairs, etc.” or as a “manner of proceeding”. Later a game is referred to as “a policy or plan of action adopted by a person” and “the course best suited to one’s interests”.<sup>3</sup> Those seem a bit detached, if not trivial. The second mention refers to a military operation as “the only game in town”, hardly an elevated meaning.<sup>4</sup>

The question is, how do such meanings fit into discussions about the common weal of the people now, if not for all time? Consideration of both the Wikipedia and the Oxford sources raises questions about the suitability of the term with respect to important considerations of international affairs. There is regard of games methods with respect to negotiations and decision support in international affairs<sup>5</sup> and for specific political calculations.<sup>6</sup> These have merit for such limited purposes.

Consideration of games as defined generally is not suitable for issues of global order and prosperity. For example, Roger Caillois is quoted as noting that a game must have the following characteristics: fun; separate (circumscribed as to time and place); uncertain; non-productive; governed by rules; and fictitious.<sup>7</sup> None of these leads one to think of the collective needs of the people in an ideal sense. Nature alone imposes some of these on us all: separation; uncertainty; and governed by rules, although large numbers of us will not know what those rules are.

When viewed from one perspective, considering global public affairs as a game is obscene. Viewed from this perspective—the non-elite one—it is easy to not get the joke if even there is one embedded there.

None of these is a good idea. Except in arcane decision support contexts, it is problematic to consider the grand task of global problem resolution as a game. Thus, let it be said, let’s not look for one.

## Getting down to business

The generalized message of the GPF presenters is clear in one sense, yet opaque in another: “We must get back to normal, though we do not know what that is.” There are scattered aspects of international order that were considered as desirable and dependable. Populism and authoritarianism are inexplicably on the rise, as was noted. We can add that theoretically, this was not supposed to happen. The troubled 20<sup>th</sup> century was to lead to a bright future all around in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Two issues surfaced in the course of the 2010s that had been lurking in the margins of public consciousness. Apart from a few dazzling successes in technology and the spread of personal freedom and autonomy, people weren’t doing well. There were three great debt runups after the 70s energy crises from the 80s on—credit card, mortgage, and derivatives. A lack of progress incomes was being compensated for through debt. In derivatives, Wall Street banks drove hard into criminal levels, but in the aftermath, few paid commensurate prices for their malfeasance.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. 2022. ‘Game’. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 22.

<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/76466?rskey=jMuQiO&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>5</sup> Haggard, S., and Simmons, B. A. 1987. Theories of international regimes. *International Organization*, 41(3): 504-504.

<sup>6</sup> Geddes, B. 1991. A game theoretical model of reform in Latin American democracies. *The American Political Science Review*, 85(2): 371-392,

<sup>7</sup> Caillois, R. 1957. *Les jeux et les hommes*. Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>8</sup> Eichengreen, B. 2015. *Hall of mirrors: The Great Depression, the Great Recession, and the uses—and misuses—of history*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 372-376.

This was lost on no one, although the sting of 2008 was softened for some by time. Populism was fueled by this, but traditional political leadership was unable to cope.<sup>9</sup> This has led to great angst on the part of many, who are desperate for change, even if that means extreme regression to incivility with the purpose of extracting revenge on symbolic enemies. For them, ancient history is to be measured in months; solutions are to be found by shaming someone.

It is not that there aren't solutions, but these are couched for perceived political reasons within the scope of the 'games' that all have come to rely on. For example, any plan must pass the market test, even where markets are ill-equipped to mediate equitable and effective transfers, such as in health. Ultimately, the old colonial mantras that lie at the base of this need to be understood for what they are: A very vicious, self-serving game that has been eroding the cultures and stripping people of their based needs for a very long time. One example of this was the British/Dutch collaboration beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to conquer the world by means of a massive navy, to extend European privilege and impose European culture, botany, and prerogatives onto the rest of the world. The result was described by Eric Hobsbaum:

*Within the colonial empires autocracy ruled, based on the combination of physical coercion and passive submission to a superiority so great as to appear unchallengeable and therefore legitimate. Soldiers and self-disciplined 'proconsuls', isolated men with absolute powers over territories the size of kingdoms, ruled over continents, while at home the ignorant and inferior masses were rampant. Was there not a lesson – a lesson in the senses of Nietzsche's Will to Power – to be learned here?*

Which is more galling, the usurpation of the rights of the colonial locals or the presumption of inferiority of the "ignorant and inferior masses" at home? Each perversion of civil relations looms over the current debate, insinuating themselves into current affairs in ways that might upset the apple cart in the process.

Fundamental to the question is the observation of America's Will Rogers, who famously opined, "*Everyone is ignorant, only in different subjects.*"<sup>10</sup> What is needed, as we will discuss, is an organized way to sort that out, to use our distributed knowledge to support a form of collective wisdom. Individually, we are ignorant; collectively we can be brilliant and wise if you can derive a method of sorting through things. Hopefully, we can use digital tools and networks to bring such wisdom forward when and how it is needed. Computers will not think our way out of our jam, but it can be set up to serve up our answers better than we can do ourselves.

It was pointed out by Priyadarshi Dash in the GPF sessions that the effects of colonization continue to reverberate in the Global South dating to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. That was not so long ago. Clearly, then, we need to extract the two formidable thorns from all the people by (1) reinforcing their cultural and nurturing roots and (2) declaring forthwith that it is the race of mankind that matters and to embrace our collective diversity.

The liberal proposition is unitary in its structures and priorities, but there is increasing hope for broader, more equivalent, if not equitable outcomes. There is generalized uncertainty as to policy frameworks such that if the Russia-Ukraine war had not been started, the title for the first session could have been "Covid-19: A global game-changer" instead of "Russia-Ukraine: A global game-changer." Indeed, the session could have been titled: "[*Insert your concern here*]: A global game-changer."

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<sup>9</sup> Eichengreen, B. 2018. *The populist temptation: Economic grievance and political reaction in the modern era*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Rhodes, D. 2015, March 27. "Everyone is ignorant, only in different subjects". Education Desk. *NPR Illinois*. Available: <https://www.nprillinois.org/education-desk/2015-03-27/everyone-is-ignorant-only-in-different-subjects>.

Something needs to be done with respect to international order and associated frameworks, structures, and policies. Hidden wedges to the postwar liberal regime, we can now see, were obscured during the Soviet Union's fall.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Hank Paulsen and China, there was a level of sardonic humor involved with such a finding with the 2008 crisis, as US policymakers appealed to China for help not long after they had had a hand at reforming Chinese finance.<sup>12</sup> The financial stumbling blocks that progressively laid bare the wedges, or weaknesses, in 2000 and 2008, were brought to the fore during the pandemic, where contrary policies of direct support proved effective. Simmering discontent has brought on populist anti-statism, which politicized discontent in mind-numbing rebellions against authority in the name of authority.

The people have awakened, but they are not yet fully alert. Even the proponents of autocratic order are punch-drunk, including Mr. Putin, who has launched a most inadvisable, importune intervention that might make sense to his personal quest, but makes little sense for his country and the cause he actively promotes in the long term. This is as recounted by several GPF commentators. It seems that he is 'swinging for the fences,' wishing to reform a kind of Soviet order, but if anything dooms the effort, it is that technological zeitgeist that permeates the world.

The given is that the people have experienced *Elysium* to various degrees and none of them are likely to forget the associated rush any time soon. This is reflected in preeminent G20 priorities: Two things they need, health and climate adaptation and critical underpinnings, such as food; one thing they want, bits and bytes on their flashy devices.

There is love and hate there, too. Something is wrong within the digital realm.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, it is so enticing, so compelling, so in tune with what people want to do, that they are willing to overlook the wasted time and distractions, along with the risks. As to all things digital, they want more and more and more.

The victory of the network declared by Manuel Castells in 1996 has finally been achieved,<sup>14</sup> all except the nooks and crannies of the world that were discussed in the GPF sessions. *There is a dirty little secret: Social media and other systems are built on command-and-control principles.* There are no technical reasons for this other than that the technologists are getting away with it. Our experience, dating to the 1970s, is that any discussion to the contrary is a non-starter, time after time after time. Castells' otherwise excellent work is blind to this. This provides a fundamental driving force for the founding of Profundities LLC and of the 2020 Program for Global Health.

Nonetheless, governments provide real services via the devices to the degree that they can; companies deliver real products in the same way, as interpreted, agreed-upon, and allowed by technologists—internal and external. This they do with impunity. As indicated by Castells, those who are left out by not having digital access are left wanting. Such inclusion, even only as consumers of the data and the processes, is rightly a major G20 priority. Empowerment, making the way for authorities and experts to apply their knowledge and responsibilities irrespective of the prerogatives of technologists, whose role is important but perfunctory, is the key function of government—that one thing that they do well as discussed by de Mistura in his GPF session if they do anything at all.

## What they couldn't figure out how to say

No one in the sessions doubted the effectiveness of government programs during the pandemic's critical stages once they learned to apply themselves. Several of them made it clear that governments saved the world from a

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<sup>11</sup> Eichengreen, 2015, 1-14.

<sup>12</sup> Paulson, Jr., H. M. 2015. *Dealing with China: An insider unmasks the new economic superpower*. New York: Twelve, 239-263.

<sup>13</sup> Margetts, H., John, P., Hale, S., and Yasseri, T. 2016. *Political turbulence: How social media shape collective action*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Castells, M. 1996. *The rise of the network society*. Malden, MA/Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers.

more drastic pandemic. This, it was aptly pointed out, was carried out through collaboration with key private actors, mostly corporations, who behaved admirably—for the most part. Barroso and Stieglitz made it clear that private enterprises with research capacity were able to deliver on the promise of long-supported government research priorities, most notably mRNA vaccine technologies. This was referenced as an undeniable public good in the long run. What wasn't so clear was how the rewards, the financial rewards, should be laid out in such matters.

As a means of tying together the loose ends of the presentations and conversations, we might observe that the presenters were describing a world in which the needs of the people were to be met directly. This was clearly not to be considered a call for ubiquitous federal development policies, as markets were not put under attack in any manner. As outlined in the first session's 'gamified' title, there was no call for what might be brutally referred to as socialization. There were feckless complaints about inequities and inequalities with respect to the 'billionaires' of the world, especially regarding taxation.

The model could be broken down into two parts characterized by differences between *needs* of the people and their *wants*. This is to say that needs should be met directly and without equivocation. We do not mean the financial needs of people or of organizations only, but their real and present biological, residential, epidemiological, sanitational, and safety needs irrespective of financial markets, pricing, or outgrowths of these. A model can be seen in *Table 1: Matrix of needs and wants from societal and natural sources* demonstrates the kind of resources that could be facilitated directly as opposed to those that could rightly be left up to market forces.

*Table 1: Matrix of needs and wants from societal and natural sources*

Distinguishing Needs from Wants		
Key determination for context-based policymaking		
	Society	Nature
Needs	Human rights Legal rights Peaceful coexistence Basic transportation Social structure Basic education & training Other as determined by natural abilities	Clean, safe environment Food Clothing Shelter Healthcare Emergency aid
Wants	Fortune Luxury, prestige, or custom services Advanced education & training Power Companionship Fame Sense of accomplishment Entertainment Competition Other as determined by natural abilities	High performance products Luxury products Prestige products Custom products

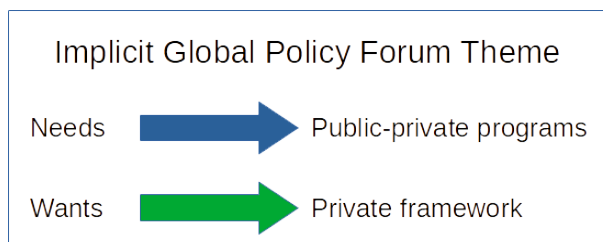
*Wants* warrant different treatment, perhaps more *gamified*. As people may tend to want better things, or different things, or unusual things. If obtaining these does not compromise their conditions nor the needs of others, policy is

well-suited to allow for freedom and initiative to create such things for sale and even to encourage their creation and use. Why not make it a game? Why not make it fun? Why not make it a competition?

If they fail, they can fall back on the primary system without suffering—they personally or their dependents.

It is not altogether easy to distinguish between the two, as can be seen in Table 1. To do so requires granular, detailed consideration of factors and contexts reflecting knowledge in the areas in question and policies and resources as available through private and public means.

There could thus be two paths to economic abundance, aiding public authorities to provide for the needs of the people or enticing others in new and uncharted ways that appeal to them for one reason or another. *Figure 3: Proposed singular policy framework for G20 policymaking* outlines the basic policy idea represented here.



*Figure 3: Proposed singular policy framework for G20 policymaking*

There would be a multitude of benefits from such a program. Personal health would likely improve; mental health would likely also improve—although there would still be questions as to personal development and initiative. Entrepreneurism could be considered in a new light, encouraging desirable activities and the development of latent talents that have been squeezed out by industrial enforcement and colonial imperatives. Karl Polanyi wrote about such conditions, about an economic and social bifurcation that was the norm in England and many other places before the conquests and deep industrialization began.<sup>15</sup>

Various examples of both kinds of programs were described in the GPD sessions. Paolo Gentiloni of the EU mentioned several of these, including the making available of microloans to individual proprietors. Sharon Thorne of Deloitte described requirements for transition to address both inequality and inequity. Bocconi registered displeasure that in some cases, accommodations between the two kinds of projects did not occur with respect to worldwide vaccine distribution. Martin Frick complained that food insecurity is compromised by a failure to provide means to small holder farmers in Africa and elsewhere.

One aspect of civilization is that it should result in civil outcomes; to the degree possible, the people ought to be protected, particularly from deals and games and other human-caused eccentricities. If people don't get their wants fulfilled under such a plan, that could safely be considered more of a personal problem, as the safety net would be available to them at any time if they so choose.

History has shown that there are many ways by which needs can be met without resorting to handouts. One area is through labor and other forms of contribution. While this might in some cases challenge the standing industrial dogma that all things must be monetized, including labor, there are many examples even in modernity where that isn't a necessary requirement. In the absence of money as a measure of value, other formulas can be derived, a very common practice through history.

<sup>15</sup> Polanyi, K. 1944/1957/2001. *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Boston: Beacon Press, 171-186.

A modern example exists at one western American university where athletes are put on contract to play. The student athletes get scholarships that have monetary value to be sure, but they are fed in part from donations of beef carcasses from local meat producers. Producers make such contributions as supporters of the athletic program, but there are reciprocal benefits, as well. Accountings for such contributions are based on documented value, something that brings tax implications. These represent non-cash transactions in return for labor performed on the part of the athletes. Various organizations and entities are involved.

Similar arrangements surfaced during the Covid-19 pandemic as discussed in the GPF. They exist in refugee programs and other situations, where people have clear and present needs and can make their labor and skills available in return.

One thing does not work, as referenced by Mario Monti, Mohammad Adhie Purnawan, and Carlos Javier Riganozzi in the sessions. This is to rely on private interests to meet the basic needs of the people of their own accord. In such matters, market forces are most tenuous, and coercion easily surfaces as a harbinger of ill and pernicious ends. As they mentioned, bad effects work their way down into animal populations, plants, and to the environmental underpinnings of all living things, which is to say, living systems. That same urge to gain financial preeminence blinds the eye of the provider to need and opens the door to taking advantage of the situation, causing pain and genuine want.

As constituted, the digital world is a hodgepodge of interests and questions that *definitely* needs to be sorted out. It is unclear where needs and wants to intersect and where public and private interests belong.

Our proposition is that sorting is indeed the thing to do. This is to say that in-depth, comprehensive classification is the task at hand to be able to clarify conditions and activate processes in support of needs and wants and public and private interests and contributions. This cannot be a static thing, but an open door to active, flexible, time-oriented processes that can be responsive to need and adaptive to a multitude of conditions that can present themselves.

## Fighting through complexity

It is not always clear what is the distinction between wants and needs. This is a weak point in such a strategy as we recommend, but one that needs to be vigorously embraced. With the proper tools and preparation, we turn the familiar phrase upside down, as in “the angels are in the details.”

Jane Horvath from Apple Computers counted as success a policy that customers needed to opt into advertising rather than opting out of the same when they didn’t want to be bothered. We all know that it is not as simple as that. There is a good deal of leeway in between, a customer may want to reconsider, and it is possible that there are nuances in-between that would allow for the parties in question to come to a workable solution that might in fact be unique to the customer in question.

This is one manifestation of the sandbox problem. The concept of computerized sandboxes is highly suspect. Sand being plastic as to form and boxes representing amorphous border environments open the doors to much mayhem, if not useless ambiguity. Digital designers need to be provided with tools that allow them to collaborate with their peers, to provide the rest of us with the best possible products of their knowledge, experience, and coordination. The rest of us need to rely on the products of their collective work such that we will be rewarded with viable, workable outcomes, financially compliant and legally sound.

As lies can now reach the ends of the earth with immediacy and scale, the truth needs to find its way to the people in targeted fashion, when and where it is needed. There is great promise in this as demonstrated by technology. Barroso said it well: “We need help in creating stronger, more resilient strategies.” How is this to be done if not by

means of technological mastery, in the development of processes that ‘stick’, that are not only effective at targeting the people and the situations needing results, but that can drive home those particular actions or ideas the bring resolution and satisfaction.

## Recommendation: The one thing

As indicated, Staffan de Mistura of the United Nations made it clear in the GPF that governmental executive branches are capable to doing one thing at a time. We make the point that there is only one problem. Can these be aligned such as they are one and the same, responsive, and interactive?

Of course, he refers to the observed limits of what an executive branch can do at one time. Armed with highly skilled, highly educated generalists and specialists, there are many things that they can do. This is an important and highly studied question, one that has been considered in depth for a very long time.<sup>16</sup> As with any executive body, it must act as generalist, interacting with, responding to, and at times directing the activities of subject matter generalists as well as specialists. Taken as a whole, it is an impossible task.

Resolution of that is a straightforward matter, outlined twice in the experience of Moses in the Hebrew Bible. We include these for instructive value although there are substantive bodies of support for these questions in the management literature.<sup>17</sup> In the first instance, Moses’ father-in-law Jethro encourages him to divide up the task in hierarchical manner as a practical matter.<sup>18</sup> There wasn’t time to consider all that came up to him for resolution. In the second instance, Moses declares a similar plan to all the people as follows:

*12. How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13. Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you... 15. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over your, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and offices among your tribes.*<sup>19</sup>

This is by now standard management practice as exists in organizations in all sectors. Interestingly, Biblical scholars note that in the second instance, Moses did not mention that the practice came from advice of Jethro—not really a crucial factor, but an interesting one.

This we would see considering the authoritative structure of that society, analogous to authoritative structures in other organizations and in social networks, for that matter. These are social relations that may translate into locational, regional, or geographic places—particularly in the case of the Hebrews, who were soon to receive such assignments. This accords with the Greek model of the demos as well, which is principally geographic.<sup>20</sup>

We recommend that the model be extended to conceptual space. This is quite necessary, given the complexities of contemporary societies and organizations. Where the advice given was that the advisors be wise, we would add that they should be knowledgeable. Where it indicates that they should be known, we add that they should have earned positions of centrality in their respective fields based on publications, presentations, awards, and documented knowledge products, including inventions and patents.

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<sup>16</sup> Porter, R. B. 1980. *Presidential decision making: The Economic Policy Board*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Bevir, M. 2012. *Governance: A very short history*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>18</sup> Exodus 18: 21-26.

<sup>19</sup> Deuteronomy 1

<sup>20</sup> Tingey, K. B., and Manicki, M. 2017. *Mother Russia: Earth’s puzzle. Realization of Greece’s polity formula*. Logan, Utah/Piotrków Trybunalski, Poland: Available: <https://tinyurl.com/nhzjnd6n>.

There are, of course, many additional examples of shared decisionmaking in both modern practice and longstanding traditions. We recommend that this be done formally, with technology, meticulously configured by principals and experts, supporting the task. Do this in health—broadly, as in *One Health*. Do this in climate science and policy. Do this in defining the various requirements of meeting SDG commitments.

We believe, using the symphonic music example, which is a highly nuanced means of applying behavior to natural phenomena and not simply a metaphor, as often asserted. The government executive should be the conductor of the whole, not a performer of any kind. If this is the one thing that gets done at the executive level, it serves the needs of the people to the degree that the system can support underlying complexities and nuances so that the people in question can perform their roles with precision, adaptability, and regularity. Results of that kind can serve to legitimize G20 countries as it can the rest.

There was a good deal of discussion as to a new normal that needed to emerge not only from the pandemic, but from the war. A responsive state focused on meeting the needs of its people which encouraging them to reach for more, for what they want for various reasons will be both stable and popular. By encouraging the development of such systems—particularly the knowledge aspect—G20 nations can be particularly helpful to all nations and peoples and the cause of peace and general prosperity.